AFRICA RECOVERY

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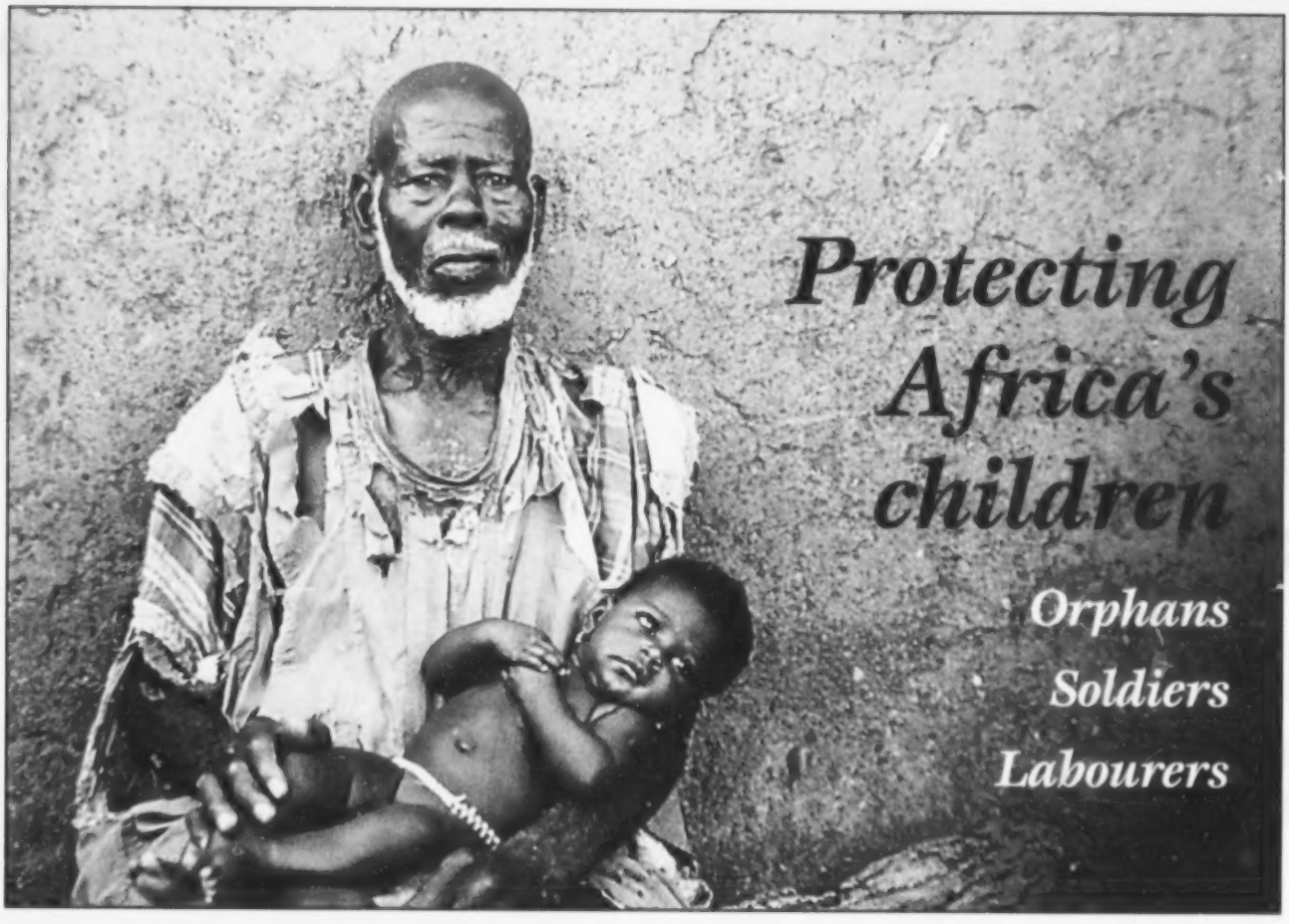

World Bank

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New Partnership for African Development stirs hope

As we go to press, a summit of African leaders in Abuja, Nigeria, officially launched the New Partnership for African Development on 23 October. Previously called the New African Initiative, it will seek to stimulate the continent's development and prepare it for the challenges of political change and globalization.

Background stories, pages 21-25

AIDS orphans: facing Africa's 'silent crisis'

By Michael Fleshman

To the tragedy of the 17 million people who have lost their lives to AIDS in Africa, add the 12 million orphaned children left behind. Traumatized by the death of parents, stigmatized through association with the disease and often thrown into desperate poverty by the loss of bread-winners, this growing army of orphans — defined as children who have lost one or both parents — is straining the traditional extended family and overwhelming national health and education systems in the most severely affected countries. The problem is particularly severe in Zambia, where, according to the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the number of orphans topped 1.2 million in 2000 — 1 in every 4 Zambian children. Of these an estimated 930,000 have lost at least one parent to AIDS.

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Africans anxious over terrorism, war

Condolences, denunciations of terror attack, and calls for caution

Every government in Africa sent condolences and messages of solidarity to the US following the 11 September terrorist attack. Some African nations lost citizens in the World Trade Centre. All worry about the economic repercussions for the continent (see box, page 4). Many are concerned about the potential political fallout, with some countries listed by the US as having harboured terrorists and others confronting violent opposition groups within their own borders. A number of African countries also have directly experienced terrorist attacks, including the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which claimed hundreds of African lives.

The African reactions, commentaries and debates on the current tragedy reflect varying viewpoints. Along with many condemnations of terrorism, there also have been numerous cautionary statements against blind vengeance and retaliation. Following is a selection of initial responses:

UN / Eskinder Debebe

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan near World Trade Centre ruins, with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani (left) and Governor George Pataki.

Olusegun Obasanjo, *President, Nigeria:* The perpetrators of this heinous crime that has resulted in huge losses of lives and property, must not go unpunished. Terrorism and terrorists must never be given comfort. The spirit of democracy must never be downcast but must be buoyed up and made unconquerable....

The world we live in now is not just enough. It is not equitable enough. Unless America can lead us to a world that is more just and equitable, we may not get out of the problem of terrorism. We may catch and punish the culprits this time, but there will be more culprits in future.

Thabo Mbeki, *President, South Africa:* The memory is still fresh in our minds of the hundreds of Africans who died when US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were attacked by people who have clearly identified the US government as their enemy. As with those who died in the hijacked planes and in New York, none of these Africans could ever be accused of having been involved in planning or conducting acts of war. They died because those who killed them have little or no regard for human life.

When our movement [the African National Congress] decided to take up arms to fight for the defeat of the apartheid system, the decision was taken that all efforts should be made to avoid the loss of human lives.... This posture was maintained throughout the three decades when the conduct of an armed struggle was an important part of the strategy of our movement. Even as our enemy and its friends denounced our movement as terrorist, we took strict measures to avoid the use of terror against the people....

Clearly, there are many issues in various parts of the world that demand a just resolution. Not least among these is the restoration of the rights of the people of Palestine.

Yoweri Museveni, *President, Uganda:* Clear-headed freedom fighters always avoid targeting non-combatants. As we extend our condolences to the people of the United States of America and to President George W. Bush, we call upon the world to act together to end terrorism.... Terrorism needs to be eradicated as we fight against all forms of oppression.

Kofi Annan, *Secretary-General, UN:* Terrorism threatens every society. As the world takes action against it, we have all been reminded of the need to address the conditions that permit the growth of such hatred and depravity. We must confront violence, bigotry and hatred even more resolutely. The United Nations' work must continue as we address the ills of conflict, ignorance, poverty and disease.

Doing so will not remove every source of hatred or prevent every act of violence. There are those who will hate and who will kill even if every injustice is ended. But if the world can show that it will carry on, that it will persevere in creating a stronger, more just, more benevolent and more genuine international community across all lines of religion and race, then terrorism will have failed.

Organization of African Unity, *communiqué of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution:* Condemns unequivocally the horrific terrorist attacks that have caused enormous loss of human life and destruction.... Expresses to the government and people of the United States of America the full solidarity and the deepest condolences of the OAU and the entire people of Africa over this tragedy which affected not only the people of the USA, but humanity as a whole.... Stresses the urgent need to bring to justice the perpetrators and sponsors of these terrorist attacks and calls on the international community to work in a more coordinated and determined manner to prevent and combat terrorism.

The Sowetan, *South African daily newspaper, editorial:* There should be no wavering about the atrocities meted against innocent civilians in the September 11 attack.... That kind of barbaric and inhuman behaviour is one that not only warrants unequivocal condemnation, but a telling response as well.... Angry, blind retaliation that is not thought through thoroughly, is not the answer. Dividing the world into two blocs, one pro-US and another not, is perhaps more dangerous if not as insane as the thinking that inspired the World Trade Centre bombers. The options which the Americans have placed to the world, that you are "with us or against us," is not helpful.

America's attitude highlights the need for a trusted international body, like the United Nations, to drive the urgent search for a solution. We believe anything short of the UN being in charge, will divide not only nationals against

each other, but nations will be forced into conflict, caused by their choice of sides.

***Cheikh Boureïma Abdou Daouda**, rector, University of Niamey mosque, Niger:* The danger is that if this [US] response becomes a war of civilizations or religion, there will be no people, no person who will not defend his faith to the death. Christians, Jews and Muslims must define terrorism together to better fight against it and to avoid any unintended consequences in the American response, [including any] equation between Muslims and terrorists.

***Baba Leigh,** imam, Kanifing East mosque, Banjul, Gambia:* The whole Muslim Ummah [people] observed the American tragedy with shock and sympathized with Americans.... Islam is a religion of Allah which only means peace and forbids any violent activity, which is bound to bring bloodshed, destruction and suffering to the people.

***Alhajie Abdoulie Fatty,** imam, State House mosque, Banjul, Gambia:* America is suffering the consequences of the use and abuse of that country's veto power on smaller states.... Years of pent-up anger and frustration of the oppressed with US foreign policy could only result in such an attack.

***Addis Tribune,** Ethiopian newspaper, editorial:* The war against terrorism is not a religious war and must not be portrayed as such. Islam, like Christianity, does not condone the mass murder of innocent civilians and it must be understood that the enemy in this case does not uphold the moral values of Islam and is seeking essentially political objectives. It should not be forgotten, furthermore, that Muslims died in the recent terrorist attacks on the US and that Muslim nations are also victims of fundamentalist terrorists.

***The Daily Graphic,** Ghanaian newspaper, editorial:* While the incident has already been labeled terrorist, we wish to caution that there is the need for the United States in particular and the Western allies in general to exercise restraint and circumspection as investigations go on to unravel the identities of those behind the act and their motives.... Without the whole truth about the identity of the perpetrators emerging, justice cannot be done and also prevention of similar incidents could be made more difficult. In all such cases where people lose their loved ones, one naturally expects the general call for revenge but that is where care needs to be taken so that an innocent person is not unnecessarily punished.

***Abdoulaye Bathily,** professor of history, former energy minister, Senegal:* The tragic events of 11 September remind us that non-violence and peace are the most precious elements for assuring justice and equity in both relations among people and in international relations. We all observe that beyond the emotions that have been stirred up, these events have rekindled passionate debates about the current new international order.

In this respect, we should note the speed with which governments are ready to mobilize major financial resources to join the struggle against terrorism. These same countries, however, declare that they do not have enough money to fight against poverty, to reduce ever widening social inequalities, to promote shared well being, or to relieve the debt of the poorest countries. Yet they always find money for war. That is the great contradiction of the contemporary world. ■

Africa hit hard by economic shockwaves

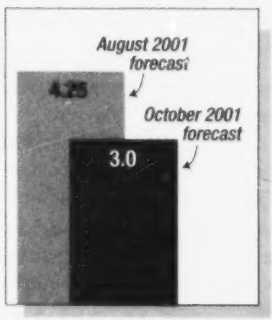
Beyond the dozens of Africans believed to have been killed in the 11 September terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Centre, thousands more will soon perish as the economic shockwaves reach the African continent. According to the World Bank, an additional 20-40,000 children under five could die worldwide because of a more severe global economic downturn and worsening poverty. About half those deaths will likely be in Africa.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn noted on 1 October that the economic aftermath of the attack will exact "another human toll that is largely unseen and one that will be felt in all parts of the developing world, especially Africa." World Bank economists estimate that economic growth in developing countries overall will be lower by 0.5-0.75 per cent in 2002 than was projected before the attack. Although they do not have specific regional estimates, they believe that Africa will be "worst hit."

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in an updated forecast issued on 10 October, believes that developing country growth in 2002 will not exceed 4.25 per cent, down a full percentage point from its earlier estimate of 5.25 per cent. For Africa specifically, the forecast has been revised from 4.25 per cent to 3 per cent, only slightly above the continent's population growth rate (see graph).

Africa will feel the effects of 11 September in different ways. Slower growth in the US and other industrialized countries will lower demand for exports from all developing regions. Commodity prices for African exports were previously forecast to fall in 2001 by an average 7.4 per cent from last year, and now will likely drop further. Because of greater insecurity, trade insurance and transport costs are simultaneously being pushed upward. In addition, the worldwide decline in tourism will bring serious losses to a sector that accounts for 10 per cent of the continent's export receipts. As a result of these combined effects, the number of Africans living in poverty, according to the World Bank, will probably increase by 2 million more than would otherwise have been the case, while another 2-3 million will be driven deeper into poverty.

Lower growth in Africa
(% of GDP growth, 2002)



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

It is not clear how world oil prices will be affected by the war in Central Asia. A few weeks after the 11 September attack, oil was about $5 per barrel cheaper than before. This depressed the earnings of Africa's major oil exporters (including Nigeria, Algeria and Gabon), but helped Africa's many poor oil-importers by lowering their costs. However, if the war is prolonged or political instability spreads to some of the major Middle East exporters, oil prices could again be pushed upward, reversing the effects in Africa.

Because of Africa's additional economic difficulties, combined with a likely decline in private capital flows due to reduced investor confidence, the World Bank urges a significant boost in foreign aid to the poorest countries of Africa and other regions. This is not very likely to happen, however. Just before the attack, the *World Economic Outlook* of the International Monetary Fund projected an additional 7.1 per cent fall in aid to Africa in 2002, after several years of decline. The need for massive humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries will place even more strain on available donor resources.

Slave trade 'a crime against humanity'

Historic declaration at anti-racism conference, but Africans urge more

By **Jullyette Ukabiala**

Africa's campaign for reparations for the injustices of slavery and colonialism recently gained significant ground. "Slavery and the slave trade were appalling tragedies ... a crime against humanity, and should always have been so," declared the final declaration of the 31 August-7 September anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa.

"Something historic has indeed happened here," South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, president of the conference, proclaimed in her closing statement. "We have agreed that the depredation of the systems of slavery and colonialism had a degrading and debilitating impact on those who are black, broadly defined."

Ms. Amina Mohamed, Kenya's ambassador to the UN Office in Geneva and spokesperson of the African delegations in Durban, noted some of the document's shortcomings, especially the lack of an explicit apology from the former slave-trading nations or any commitment to specific reparations aimed at compensating those who suffered from the trade. Although the compromise agreement "is terribly imperfect," she said, it still "provides a good basis to build on."

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, who served as conference secretary-general, saw the outcome as positive. The document, she said, "sets out the issue in plain, unequivocal language for the first time" and "will resonate throughout the world and especially among those who still bear the scars" of slavery.

The last-ditch agreement on this language — along with a separate compromise on the Middle East conflict — saved the Durban conference from failure. Disagreements on the two sets of issues had already caused the withdrawal of the US and Israeli delegations on the fourth day and brought walk-out threats from some European delegates. Inability to reach agreement on the final document would have totally derailed the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, as it was officially known.

Campaign for reparations

The debates in Durban marked the latest phase of a decade-long campaign by African countries and representatives of the African diaspora to gain international recognition for the injustices perpetrated against them in the era of the slave trade. The issue was not just one of righting an historical wrong, they argued, but also of addressing the lasting legacy of poverty and discrimination suffered over centuries by Africa and its descendants.

In the early 1990s, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) officially embraced the idea of making claims for atonement, including specific reparations, for slavery and colonialism. African heads of state, during their 1992 summit, created an eminent persons group to explore the issue. Co-chaired by the late Nigerian pro-democracy leader Chief Moshood Abiola and former UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the group organized a pan-African conference on reparations in 1993.

The debates in Durban marked the latest phase of a decade-long campaign by African countries and representatives of the African diaspora to gain international recognition for the injustices perpetrated against them in the era of the slave trade.

Held in Abuja, Nigeria, it laid out Africa's main arguments on the issue. The Abuja Proclamation observed that the damage caused by slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism "is not a thing of the past, but is painfully manifest in the damaged lives of contemporary Africans from Harlem to Harare, in the damaged economies of the black world from Guinea to Guyana, from Somalia to Suriname." It argued that a moral debt is owed to African peoples and called for "full monetary payment ... through capital transfer and debt cancellation." Subsequently, demands that the slave trade be named a crime against humanity and that the former slave-trading nations apologize for it were woven into the case for reparations.

The campaign received support from some African-American groups in the US, which in a parallel effort were raising the notion of reparations from the US government for the persistence of slavery in that country until the second half of the 19th century. And on the specific issue of an apology, it also gained encouragement from the apology by Pope John Paul II "for the sins of Christian Europe against Africa" during a 1991 visit to Senegal's Gorée Island, one of the main transit centres for the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Debate among Africans

From the beginning, the call for reparations has stirred controversy. Some have argued that the slave trade took place too long ago to make legal remedies possible, and that disagreements over who would pay reparations, to whom, where and in what form made the idea unworkable. Others noted that Africans themselves had colluded with foreign slave dealers by kidnapping and selling their people into slavery. Moreover, Africans also practiced slavery, and in some African countries they continue to do so.

In the months leading up to the Durban conference, differences emerged over how to proceed with the campaign. While there was general agreement on having the slave trade declared a crime against humanity, not everyone felt that an explicit apology or financial reparations were worth pursuing.

Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade sparked a national debate by arguing that the demand for reparations trivialized the impact of slavery by suggesting that it could be compensated with money. He noted that some Africans, including his own ancestors, had owned slaves. At the Durban conference, he maintained that "the consequences of slavery are not the same in different regions. The problem of reparations has been raised in generic terms and we cannot have worldwide consensus on this." He proposed a case-by-case approach that also would consider the position of the African diaspora.

During the preparatory meetings for the conference, South Africa, trying to dampen the controversy over African calls for an apology, suggested instead that they accept a more modest expression of "regret," which the European delegations were prepared to back. It hoped that such flexibility would persuade European countries to be more accommodating on other issues of interest to Africa. Yet at the conference, South Africa joined the rest of the African Group in a common position on reparations and apology.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo made it clear that his country stood firmly

behind the demand for an explicit apology. "The wider international community has consistently failed to appreciate the reality that is particularly painful for us Africans.... Apology must be extended by states which practiced and benefited from slavery, the slave trade or colonialism.... For us in Africa, an apology is a deep feeling of remorse, expressed with the commitment that never again will such acts be practiced."

Yet President Obasanjo also questioned the merits of reparations. Once an apology was obtained, he said, continuing to seek reparations would no longer make sense. Not "every apology must be followed by monetary compensation.... We must not forget that monetary compensation, as it is being proposed, may further hurt the dignity of Africa."

President Pedro Pires of Cape Verde likewise wondered how reparations could reasonably be assessed, while President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo thought that declaring slavery a crime against humanity would be adequate reparation.

Others, however, persisted in calling for both an apology and reparations. Zambian Vice-President Enoch Kavindele argued for an "international compensation scheme" for the victims of the slave trade, along with a "development restoration fund" for countries that were affected by colonialism. Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Cameroon's UN ambassador (and currently president of the UN Economic and Social Council), said that reparations "should not be considered compassion or charity," but an "affirmation of basic human rights."

A few delegations raised particular national concerns. Angolan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Georges Chikoti noted that his country had not only suffered from the slave trade and European colonialism, but following its independence in 1975 was also "invaded by troops of the apartheid regime." Despite a UN Security Council resolution calling on South Africa to pay reparations, "to this day not a penny was given, nor apology made." Rwanda's Minister of Justice and Institutional Relations Jean de Dieu Mucyo drew attention to the 1994 genocide in his country, stating that "effective justice for the victims is needed. That means not only prosecution of the perpetrators, but assistance to the victims to help them reintegrate into society."

European reluctance

One factor that complicated the African campaign was the reluctance of the 15-member European Union (EU) to agree to outright recognition of the slave trade as a crime against humanity. Some EU members are former slave-trading nations, and feared that such a declaration could open them up to legal action.

Ernest Harsch

Courtyard of Elmina Castle, on Ghana's coast, once a major trans-shipment centre for African slaves sent to the Americas.

Once the conference issued its declaration and Programme of Action, Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel, speaking on behalf of the European delegation, sought to minimize their potential significance. They are "political, not legal documents," he said. "These documents cannot impose obligations or liability or a right to compensation on anyone. Nor are they intended to do so." Reportedly, such concern about future liability was a reason that both the US and the EU had tried to keep the issue of slavery and reparations off the conference agenda in the first place.

Several European countries that had been heavily involved in the slave trade also strongly resisted Africa's call for a straight apology. As a result, the conference agreed only that it "profoundly regrets the massive human suffering and the tragic plight of millions." It noted that some countries had already "taken the initiative to apologize and have paid reparation where appropriate," suggesting that precisely what to do should be left to countries' discretion.

Among the few European delegates who seemed to lean towards the African view was Mr. Roger van Boxtel, the Netherlands' minister for urban policy and integration of ethnic minorities. While expressing "deep remorse" for his country's involvement in the slave trade, he added that "an expression of remorse is not enough and cannot be used as an excuse for taking no action in the present. It is important to implement structural measures that benefit the descendants of former slaves and future generations."

Ultimately, the conference deflected the call for specific reparations. The declaration did acknowledge arguments that the historical injustices of the slave trade "have undeniably contributed to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability and insecurity in different parts of the world." It recognized, in vague terms, the need for remedial measures, "programmes for the social and economic development" of affected societies and Africans in the diaspora. These would include "debt relief, poverty eradication, building or strengthening democratic institutions, promotion of foreign direct investment and market access." It also urged the UN and the developed countries to support the continent's New African Initiative (see page 21).

Pressing on

Not fully satisfied with the compromise reached in Durban, a number of African countries have pledged to continue pressing for an outright apology and reparations. The process had only begun in Durban, stated Ms. Mohamed of Kenya, and "it must continue."

According to Ms. Dlamini Zuma, the South African foreign minister, "an apology is necessary, not for monetary gain, but to restore the dignity and humanity of those who suffered." South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also pressing for reparations, declared that payment was a way for the former slave traders to say, "We are sorry for what happened."

Prof. Ali Mazrui, an internationally known Kenyan academic, cautions that it will be difficult for Africa to press its case. "It is not politically realistic at this stage," he told *Africa Recovery*, "to expect the concerned Western states to make a commitment to reparations and an apology, due to the highly political nature of the issue." A member of the eminent persons group on reparations established by the OAU in 1992, he is nevertheless optimistic over the long term. "An apology is on the way," he says. "The crusade is one that will take a while to reach its objectives." In the short term, Prof. Mazrui regards the outcome of the Durban conference as "a major step forward." The issue "is now receiving more and more global attention, even if it is still nowhere near implementation." ■

Africa opposes new round of trade talks

Leaders instead urge full implementation of earlier WTO agreements

By **Gumisai Mutume**

On the eve of the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting, scheduled to take place in Doha, Qatar, from 9-13 November, African countries are unified in their opposition to a new round of trade negotiations. This could again halt efforts by industrial nations to launch formal talks on further liberalizing global trade.

Together with other developing regions, Africa blocked the launch of a new "round" at the WTO's last ministerial meeting, in Seattle in December 1999, on the grounds that the continent had not seen any benefits from the agreements it had signed as part of the 1994 Uruguay Round. Some 70 per cent of gains registered have gone to industrialized nations; the remainder mostly to a few large export-oriented, developing countries, according to the UN Development Programme.

Mr. Iddi Simba, Tanzania's trade minister and chief negotiator for Africa at the WTO, notes, "Many developing countries would prefer to solve the implementation issues remaining from the Uruguay Round agreement before advancing to the next stage of multilateral negotiations." Negotiations under the Uruguay Round were launched in 1986 and ended in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 1994, culminating in a daunting list of about 60 agreements, annexes and decisions. The agreements, which are legally binding, gave birth to the WTO in 1995.

After meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June this year to prepare for the WTO meeting, African trade ministers concluded that they should continue to push for the "effective implementation of WTO obligations by developed countries." They noted that they had "expected that a number of trade-related issues of importance to African and other developing countries such as trade and commodities, trade and finance and transfer of technology would be taken up in the WTO work programme.... This has not materialized."

At the ministerial meeting, the 142 members of the WTO will need to resolve the concerns that have arisen from the uneven implementation of the existing agreements. Mr. Munir Akram, ambassador of Pakistan to the WTO, speaking on behalf of developing countries, noted that very few, if any, of the 50 or so most urgent implementation issues are likely to be resolved beforehand. "This justifies the evaluation that there have been no welcome advances, no positive developments, almost no headway towards positive decisions," he said.

African products face restrictions

For Africa, the most important issue remaining from the Uruguay Round is the failure of developed countries to open their markets to products from the South. Many African countries continue to face restrictions in areas in which they have a competitive advantage — agriculture, labour, textiles and apparel. They are asking that provisions governing a practice termed "tariff escalation" be revised to allow for greater access of African products into industrial nations. Tariff escalation involves charging low tariffs on raw materials imported from the South, higher tariffs on imports of partially processed goods and much higher tariffs on fully processed products. Core exports from developing countries such as metals, textiles, cereals, leather, sugar, fish, tobacco, rubber and wood products are often targeted. Duties on these products can peak higher than 100 per cent over base duties. At the WTO, industrial nations have committed to reducing their levels of tariff escalation, but developing countries say the levels of reduction are too small and the process is too slow.

Ship worker: African goods have limited entry to Northern markets.

The World Bank estimates that if 37 sub-Saharan countries were granted duty-free access to markets in Canada, the European Union (EU), Japan and the US on goods currently subject to peak tariffs, their total annual revenue from non-oil exports could increase by 14 per cent — or some $2.5 bn for the region.

There have been efforts to provide preferential access for African goods into industrialized markets. These include the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act signed into law in the US last year. It covers 1,800 products, but due to its onerous requirements many countries may fail to take full advantage of the act. Also, not all African countries are eligible. It is open only to nations that have strongly market-based economies, are committed to democracy and protect private and inteilectual property rights (see *Africa Recovery*, July 2000).

Another attempt to open Northern markets to African goods was the Cotonou Agreement signed between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states in Benin last year. The accord replaced a preferential trade agreement known as the Lomé Convention, but it can only be enforced if ratified by all EU members and two-thirds of ACP countries. By March, no EU member had ratified it and only a handful of ACP countries had done so.

In February, the EU approved an "Everything but Arms" initiative to grant tariff-free

and quota-free access to European markets for all products from the world's 49 least-developed countries, except armaments.

"Unfortunately, the EU proposal was swiftly attacked by powerful vested interests that succeeded in removing commodities such as sugar, rice and bananas from the liberalization commitments," Mr. K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), told the African trade ministers conference in Addis Ababa. "This has led some critics to change the name of this initiative from 'Everything but Arms' to 'Everything but Farms'." The EU began to eliminate duties and quotas in March, but those on imported sugar, rice and bananas are to be phased out over a period of years. Critics point out that the initiative is not legally binding and countries must also go through lengthy processes before it can be implemented.

Yet, under pressure from economic reforms mandated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Africa reduced or removed its tariffs on developed country imports even earlier than required under its WTO commitments. This exposed African farmers to unfettered competition from countries with strong economies, from which farmers had been somewhat sheltered by a combination of high tariffs and state subsidies. Bank President James Wolfensohn states that, on average, African governments have cut tariffs in half since the early 1980s. In return, he notes, "Too many countries have been left out" of the benefits of liberalization. "For trade to promote development that really benefits the poor, we have to focus on the needs of developing countries inside the trade negotiations." Unlike African leaders, he believes implementation concerns should be dealt with in a new negotiating round.

Domestic support measures also have not been removed. Under this practice, governments support local producers, like farmers, with financial subsidies and incentives which make it possible to sell their products more cheaply. African states, together with other developing countries, want a substantial reduction in these measures in the industrialized countries, on the grounds that they flood international markets with agricultural produce from rich countries, lower global produce prices and harm small farmers. Under Uruguay, industrial nations should have reduced domestic support measures that affect trade by 20 per cent by 2001. Instead, agricultural subsidies among the 30 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of the industrialized countries have risen from $182 bn in 1995 just after the agreement was signed, to some $360 bn today, according to the UN Conference on Trade and Development. This equals sub-Saharan Africa's combined gross domestic product in 1999.

Among the agreements signed in 1994 at Marrakesh was a special ministerial decision under which industrialized countries undertook to compensate the poorest "net food importing countries" for the negative effects that were anticipated following the liberalization of trade in agriculture. Rich nations, together with the Bretton Woods institutions, would provide food aid, grants and technical assistance for agricultural development. By 1997, 64 countries faced with rising food import costs had qualified for such assistance, but the provision has never been implemented, developing countries say. The World Bank, however, says it is providing technical assistance to countries that ask for it.

Electronic components factory in South Africa: Processed exports face especially high tariffs.

Africa Photos

Implementation costs money

According to the World Bank, many African countries have not been able to meet their WTO obligations because of the high costs associated with the reforms. It notes that some requirements ignore the fact that these countries do not have the financial or technical means to meet the new standards. In one study, the Bank estimates the cost of implementing three of the Uruguay agreements in developing countries would be some $150 mn. These were the Customs Valuation Agreement (which sets guidelines on determining the accurate value of imported goods), the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) agreement (which sets out rules for food safety, animal and plant health) and the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights agreement (TRIPS).

To comply with the customs agreement, developing countries must draft new laws, computerize customs systems, recruit and train staff and provide laboratory and detection equipment to fight smuggling.

The SPS agreement permits importing countries to restrict trade to protect the health and lives of people, animals and plants. Experts point out that most developing countries have to overhaul their systems in order to meet these requirements, while developed countries have only to apply their domestic regulations fairly at the border. Developing countries acknowledge the need for proper sanitary standards, but find themselves facing greatly differing interpretations of the requirements among importing countries. Many feel that these standards are sometimes used by industrialized countries to block developing-country imports, as another "non-tariff" barrier to trade.

Many agree that the TRIPS agreement also makes undue demands of many African countries, requiring states to abide by conventions they have not previously chosen to sign. Most developing countries should have been "TRIPS compliant" by last year, but are not. The least developed have until January 2006 to become compliant, but most have little prospect of doing so. The US continues to state that it supports the "full and faithful implementation" of the WTO agreements, meaning that developing countries must meet the obligations they took on in Marrakesh, and within the agreed-upon time frame.

African countries have also requested the WTO to amend TRIPS by removing clauses that allow the patenting of life forms. While Africa is supported by some countries in other

developing regions, the US in particular is opposing changes. Africa has also proposed that TRIPS be revised to ensure that nothing in it can be used to prevent developing countries from providing their citizens with access to medicines at affordable prices (see *Africa Recovery*, June 2001). The Bank study concludes that "developing countries have neither the economic incentive nor political will to implement these obligations.... From their perspective, the implementation exercise has been imposed in an imperial way, with little concern for what it will cost, how it will be done or if it will support their development efforts."

Liberalization rolls on

Even as Africa continues to press for favourable terms on the agreements of the last round, experts say it needs to fully prepare for current and future negotiations if it is to avoid repeating past problems. It is commonly accepted that the continent was hobbled by its lack of negotiating power during the Uruguay Round. Unlike wealthier countries, African nations had limited influence over what was included or excluded from the agreements.

"African countries are much wiser now, better informed, more critical, and, despite the paucity of their resources in Geneva and in the capitals, they are beginning to make a significant contribution to the debates," notes Mr. Yash Tandon, director of the International South Group Network, a Zimbabwe-based non-governmental organization. "Gone are the days when African countries could be taken for a ride."

The industrialized countries are pushing for a new round that will liberalize rules for investment, competition policy, government procurement, trade facilitation and electronic commerce — all designed to open domestic markets to foreign companies. These countries — home to most of the world's multinational firms — want to limit the ability of governments to favour domestic companies over foreign firms by, for example, reserving import or distribution rights for local businesses or national government agencies. Developed countries also want the removal of "barriers to investment," such as government policies that compel foreign corporations to form partnerships with local firms or to recruit and train local professionals. The same countries would like the WTO to allow members to restrict trade with countries that fail to meet certain levels of environmental protection, do not guarantee the right to unionize and permit the employment of children.

"Many developing countries would prefer to solve the implementation issues remaining from the Uruguay Round agreement before advancing to the next stage of multilateral negotiations."

— Mr. Iddi Simba
Tanzanian trade minister

Even if no new round is formally launched, however, the liberalization process will not stop. Ms. Sophia Murphy, of the US-based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, notes that some of the most contentious agreements contain clauses that call for new talks to take place without further authorization. "Whether or not a broad round is launched this November, governments are already obliged to review the existing agreements on agriculture, services and intellectual property rights."

As part of this "built-in agenda," negotiations continue in Geneva on ways to further liberalize under the Agreement on Agriculture and expand the General Agreement on Trade in Services, both signed in 1994. Civil society activists find the negotiations in services the most troubling because the changes — which would affect the provision of health, education, environmental protection, social security, transportation, postal and municipal services — could radically transform and limit the role governments worldwide can play in providing public services, placing them in the hands of multinational corporations. The negotiations are scheduled to conclude in 2002 and will inevitably involve additional obligations on developing countries.

"If they care about the trade system," says Ms. Murphy, "they will also focus on how to create more equitable trade rules for poor countries and how to harmonize trade rules with social and environmental policy." ■

Africa's agenda for a 'development' round

In July, trade ministers from 25 least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa met in Zanzibar, Tanzania, to adopt a common agenda for the WTO's meeting. It includes:

Implementation of all Uruguay Round commitments: Industrialized countries must ensure "full and effective implementation" of all obligations incurred under the 1994 Uruguay agreements. These include delivery of promised financial and technical resources, as well as assistance to the poorest "net food importing" countries.

Increased market access: Industrialized nations should commit to duty- and quota-free access to all LDC products, and eliminate all domestic support measures, including agricultural subsidies, that have had a negative impact on LDC exports.

Exemption from TRIMs: The poorest African states are asking to be exempted from trade-related investment measures (TRIMs), set for implementation by 2003. Under these measures, they are obliged to remove legislation protecting local business and industry from open competition with foreign companies, as well as rules dictating that a percentage of local products must be sourced locally.

Interpretation of TRIPs: The LDCs are seeking a formal interpretation of trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPs) that acknowledges the right of poor countries to obtain at affordable cost medicines to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other deadly diseases. They also want assurance that TRIPs will not be interpreted in a way that endangers food security; and clarification that it will not be used to grant patents to life forms and biological processes.

Action on "built-in" agenda: The LDCs are pressing for continuing negotiations on the Uruguay Round's "built-in" agenda: the General Agreement in Trade in Services and the Agreement on Agriculture. Against opposition from the richer countries, the LDCs want the trade in services negotiations extended to allow easier movement of workers from developing to developed countries. As part of the agriculture discussions, the LDCs want industrialized countries to immediately remove export subsidies on goods that are also produced by developing countries.

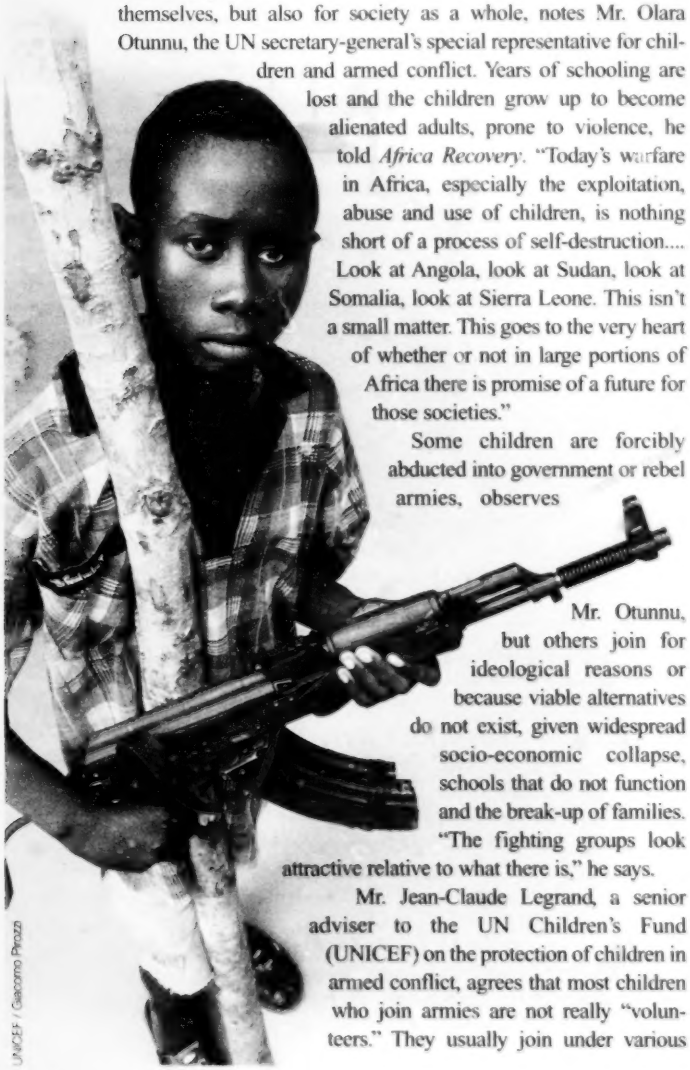
No new issues: The LDCs do not want new issues brought into the negotiations. Nor do they want new rules on facilitating trade. They argue that global trade can be improved through more financial and technical assistance to narrow the gap between rich and poor countries in technical knowledge and human resources.

The road from soldier back to child

Demobilization and rehabilitation are only the first steps

About a third of the world's child soldiers are in Africa. According to a report by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, a non-governmental alliance that includes Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, an estimated 300,000 child soldiers, some as young as seven, are actively fighting in 41 countries, with about 120,000 of them in Africa. Another 500,000 children worldwide may be in paramilitary organizations. For those who recruit them, "children are cheap, expendable and easier to condition into fearless killing and unthinking obedience," the report comments.

Military recruitment is harmful not only for the children themselves, but also for society as a whole, notes Mr. Olara Otunnu, the UN secretary-general's special representative for children and armed conflict. Years of schooling are lost and the children grow up to become alienated adults, prone to violence, he told *Africa Recovery*. "Today's warfare in Africa, especially the exploitation, abuse and use of children, is nothing short of a process of self-destruction.... Look at Angola, look at Sudan, look at Somalia, look at Sierra Leone. This isn't a small matter. This goes to the very heart of whether or not in large portions of Africa there is promise of a future for those societies."



UNICEF / Giacomo Pirozzi

Some children are forcibly abducted into government or rebel armies, observes Mr. Otunnu, but others join for ideological reasons or because viable alternatives do not exist, given widespread socio-economic collapse, schools that do not function and the break-up of families. "The fighting groups look attractive relative to what there is," he says.

Mr. Jean-Claude Legrand, a senior adviser to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the protection of children in armed conflict, agrees that most children who join armies are not really "volunteers." They usually join under various economic, social and political pressures. "You find that some of them just volunteer to get a meal a day. It's a survival strategy," he told *Africa Recovery*. "And many of the children are being promised access to education."

For Djibril Karim, who was recruited into the Sierra Leone army at the age of 13, the goal was sheer survival. With his parents and brothers killed by rebel forces, Djibril explained in an interview with *Africa Recovery*, he wandered the countryside for months trying to find a safe place, eventually ending up at a small town protected by an army camp. To stay there, he and other refugee children had to work in the camps for the soldiers. "You had to collaborate with the military in order to breathe in that town," he recalls. Then as rebels killed more and more adult soldiers, the army turned increasingly to younger recruits. The children were confronted with a stark choice: "you can either join us or you leave." And leaving meant almost certain death at rebel hands.

After less than a week of rudimentary training, Djibril and his mates were sent out into active combat, where they again were faced with a choice: either die or kill rebels — some of whom were themselves children. In his first ambush against the rebels, Djibril initially was too frightened to shoot. Then those next to him were hit, "and their blood was all over my face and my uniform. There was no other way out. You had to pull the trigger." Of the hundred or so soldiers in his unit, more than half were children. "Some of the kids were so young they couldn't even hold the gun. They had to drag it on the ground."

The experience was dehumanizing. Many, like Djibril, have lost their entire families and were encouraged by their commanders to simply take revenge. Often the children fought under the influence of drugs supplied by the adults. Some were required to take part in the torture killing of captured rebels. "You didn't really care what you were doing," recalls Djibril. "I didn't think there was any point in being alive anyway."

Young girls also were in the army camp, he says, as "basically captives." They cooked and did other tasks, and frequently were raped and beaten. Some eventually were also conscripted into military service.

Two tales of rescue

Horrified by such stories, a number of donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become more active in campaigns to halt the military recruitment of children and to demobilize and rehabilitate those forced to serve. In the process, they have succeeded in altering the general climate regarding child recruitment. Not so long ago, notes Mr. Otunnu, armies and insurgent forces in Africa and Latin America "would proudly display the young people fighting in their ranks: 'Look at our brave young men. They are defending the land. They are fighting for

self-determination.' Not anymore. They've gone on the defensive."

Beyond convincing governments and rebel movements to adhere to international conventions prohibiting child conscription, the first step often involves rescuing children already in uniform. Mr. Legrand of UNICEF has supervised child demobilization programmes in Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and other countries. Initially, these were mainly "traditional demobilization programmes," in which combatants were disarmed and demobilized following cease-fires and peace agreements. But now, says Mr. Legrand, "we are more and more developing programmes to demobilize and reintegrate children when war is still going on."

In Uganda, Mr. Legrand led a successful effort to obtain the release of 165 child soldiers from a military camp. The government, which was working closely with UNICEF on other child-related issues, arranged the cooperation of a local commander. At first, he agreed to release 40 children from the ranks, but with UNICEF prodding, eventually approved the agency's direct access to the camp. One consideration was UNICEF's offer to provide a truck of water each day. "That's the advantage of UNICEF being an organization dealing with health, water and education," notes Mr. Legrand. "You can mobilize these resources for programmes on demobilization of child soldiers."

While reviewing the soldiers in formation, Mr. Legrand asked them to remove their caps. He and his colleagues identified 225 who looked rather young, and after individual interviews, determined that 165 were in fact under-age, far more than the original number cited by the local commander. The following day Mr. Legrand obtained the government's formal agreement for the children's release.

"Unfortunately," comments Mr. Legrand, "you don't have so many governments in that region that would agree to go through the process with UNICEF." Other countries involved in the war in the DRC "would never allow us to do that." Nevertheless, release of the children still required some pressure on the Ugandan authorities, underlying the need for UNICEF to be bold enough to "challenge our best partners."

In Sierra Leone, there were no such "best partners." UN and other personnel worked together with local civil society networks to put pressure on both government and rebel forces to abide by the terms of the peace agreement. They sought to convince the commanders that it was in their own interests to release the children in their ranks. This has had some success, even with particularly brutal forces such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). While children remain useful to rebel forces, Mr. Legrand notes, groups sometimes also desire a measure of international credibility and agree to release child combatants.

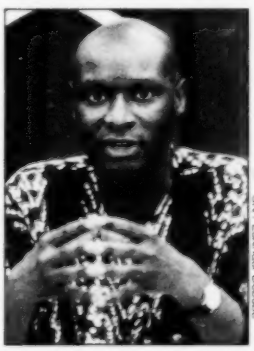
However, in the first group released by the RUF, there were no girls. This was unacceptable, recalls Mr. Legrand. "We don't want to be an organization demobilizing only boys. For UNICEF, there is a very strong sense of priority for the most vulnerable, and in this case the most vulnerable are the girls." Under stepped-up pressure, the RUF eventually began to free some girls. In the most recent release, there were 66 girls, about half of whom had babies.

Rupture with the past

Once freed, the children often are taken to transit centres. "The very first thing you have to do is create a rupture with the military life," says Mr. Legrand. "We try to ensure that the camps have no military staff." Churches, NGOs and local civil associations run many such centres. In Sierra Leone, he notes, churches play a major role, while in the DRC civil society is generally weak, making it harder to set up and operate such camps.

Before returning the children to their families or communities, the centres provide them with essential health and psychological care, and frequently with basic education and skills training. Counseling is especially vital, says Mr. Legrand.

However, for many such children, the transition is not easy. Djibril, who was sent to Benin Home, a transit centre outside Sierra Leone's capital, remembers that the children often fought with each other, tending to choose sides according to whether they had been with the rebels or with the army. Over time, tensions cooled among the youths. But they continued to vent their anger against the centre itself, frequently breaking windows and causing other damage. Because the original promises to them were "exaggerated," Djibril maintains, the youths felt frustrated by the centre's limited facilities and resources. "Some of us were still very angry." At first, they also refused to go to the remedial classes that were offered and sold the school supplies they were given. Although some eventually began attending the classes, those only took place in the mornings. "After lunch time we basically just hung about. There wasn't really much to do."



UN / Esaïnder Bellaïne

"Today's warfare in Africa, especially the exploitation, abuse and use of children, is nothing short of a process of self-destruction.... This goes to the very heart of whether or not in large portions of Africa there is a promise of a future for those societies."

— Mr. Olara Otunnu,
UN secretary-general's special representative for children and armed conflict

Other problems result from stigmatization. People outside the transit centres, including other children, often fear the former child soldiers or resent the special support they are given. Mr. Legrand argues that it is important to have programmes that involve not only those who have carried arms, but all children affected by conflict. "The best way we can help these children is for them to not be considered any more as soldiers. We need to help them to not be stigmatized forever by this image."

After some months, depending on their circumstances, the children are reunited with their families. If no surviving relatives

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Restoring lost childhood in Sierra Leone

UN and NGOs run programmes to reintegrate former child soldiers

By **Masimba Tafirenyika**
Freetown

A 45-minute drive along a muddy road leads to the small town of Lakka, about 20 kilometres south of Freetown, Sierra Leone's war-torn capital. There sits St. Michael's Lodge, as it used to be called, a place once favoured by tourists for its beautiful beaches surrounded by stunning mountains. Today, however, people visit the lodge not to escape from the demands of their daily lives but to trace children long lost or abducted during Sierra Leone's vicious civil war.

Renamed the Family Homes Movement, the centre now houses more than 90 former child soldiers, themselves victims of a war that has torn apart the lives of virtually every Sierra Leonean over the past decade. It is one of the several child protection facilities operating in this West African nation. The children, who range in age from 6 to 17 years, live in run-down bungalows formerly used by the tourists. A two-storey building with peeling green and red paint is being revamped and sub-divided into classrooms to provide basic education.

Barely a year ago, these children were fighting with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels and the Civil Defence Force, a pro-government militia better known as the Kamajors. During the war, thousands of children, some as young as six years old, were press-ganged, drugged and given weapons to commit grisly atrocities, including chopping off the limbs of civilians. With the signing of a peace accord in Lomé, Togo, in 2000 and several subsequent agreements, the RUF has released more than 1,800 former child soldiers, mostly boys. Child protection agencies, however, estimate that the warring factions abducted as many as 6,000 children, out of which about 3,500 actually fought in the war. The rest were used as sex slaves or for carrying weapons.

Many girls still held

Both the RUF and the Kamajors have shown greater willingness to release boys than girls. Of the 92 children staying at the Family Homes Movement centre, only one is a girl. Some of those released so far were either pregnant or brought babies with them. The rebels use the girls for sex or for cooking and other household chores.

Child advocates have been pressing the parties to release more girls. Recently, as a result of pressure from the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), there has been a steady stream of released girls. In order to reinforce UN involvement in reintegrating child soldiers, Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed an adviser on child protection, attached to the office of his special representative in Sierra Leone.

Masimba Tafirenyika is an information officer with the UNAMSIL peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone.

The story of Alusine Sesay, 17, is typical of most of the released children, or "children associated with fighting forces" as the child protection agencies prefer to call them. He was among a group of schoolchildren abducted by the RUF in 1997 while attending classes in the central town of Magburaka. After three months of military training in Makeni, the former RUF headquarters, Alusine started carrying weapons for the rebels through the battle zones. Although he was not involved in fighting, Alusine was shot in his left leg in an ambush by the Kamajors in October 2000. He was later brought to Freetown for treatment, but not early enough to save his infected leg from amputation.

Alusine now attends classes taught by the Family Homes Movement and has high hopes of becoming an accountant. "He is one of the brightest students we have here," says Ms. Adriana Marsili, a Catholic nun who supervises the centre.

"I would like to meet my parents even though I am disabled," Alusine says, speaking softly and deliberately as he narrates his experiences with the RUF.

Training and counseling

Under an arrangement worked out by UNICEF and UNAMSIL, the RUF and the Kamajors release the children to UNAMSIL, which then hands them over to child protection agencies. They are first housed in camps or interim care centres while efforts are made to reunite them with families. In the meantime, they receive training in carpentry, masonry, pottery, fishing, tailoring, and auto mechanics, with funds provided by UNICEF through the Child Protection Network, an umbrella group that includes the International Rescue Committee, Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Family Homes Movement and Caritas, a Catholic relief group.

Those released into the care of child protection agencies stay for a maximum of six months, except when a child still requires medical treatment or family members cannot be traced. Upon receiving children who have turned in their weapons, Caritas takes them to interim care centres in the towns of Kabala, Koinadugu, Port Loko and Lungi for registration, family tracing and reunification. Those whose families cannot be traced are placed into foster care or group homes where they are provided with formal education, skills training and psychosocial trauma counseling pending reintegration into society.

Mr. Ibrahim Sesay, director of Caritas, says his organization's main objective is "to restore lost childhood to the children associated with fighters and provide them with attractive opportunities," especially those between 15 and 18 years. "We have to give them hope for the future and raise their self-esteem. We have to show them that there is life beyond carrying a gun," says Sesay.

Caritas also works with the Sierra Leone army and UNAMSIL

peacekeepers, with assistance from UNICEF, to raise awareness of child rights among soldiers.

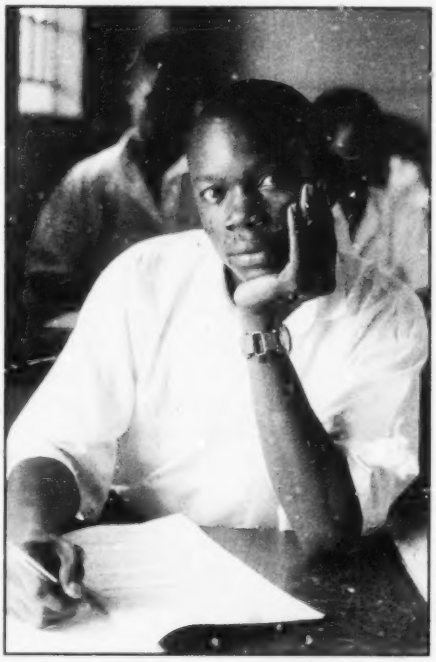
These centres are not without problems. There have been reports of fighting among the traumatized children. Many resent being called child soldiers, thus the term "children associated with fighting forces" coined by the agencies. Special arrangements have been made to protect girls from sexual abuse or related offences by the boys.

Makeshift tents

Unlike established centres like the Family Homes Movement, which has been operating as a children's home since 1990, most centres do not have permanent structures but operate from makeshift tents. The ADRA-run centre in Waterloo, about 35 kilometres east of Freetown, is one. It operates from what used to be an airfield, with tent shelters housing the children built on either side of the runway. But in all these centres, children receive formal education and training in various skills. Child mothers, as they are often called, also learn how to take care of their babies.

A UNICEF official in Freetown maintained that the problem of helping former child soldiers has some unique features in Sierra Leone: not only were the children press-ganged into joining the rebels, but they also were forced to commit atrocities, often while under the influence of palm wine, crack cocaine or amphetamines.

Giving these children some hope for the future — by sending them back to school or arming them with skills — requires greater resources than currently available, note local child protection workers. Without alternatives, the children will remain a ready pool of potential recruits for various armed factions, in Sierra Leone or elsewhere in the region. And Alusine's hopes of becoming an accountant will remain just that — a hope. ■



UNICEF / Giacomo Pirozzi

A former child soldier attending classes in Bo, Sierra Leone.

Child soldiers

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can be traced, they are placed in foster homes. For Djibril, an uncle was found in Freetown and he went to stay with him for a time.

The ultimate goal is to help the children become full members of society again. "The best thing we can do for the children," says Mr. Legrand, "is to help them reintegrate into their communities and be reunified with their families. What their family can do and what their community can do is much bigger than anything we can do ourselves."

Yet reintegration is not a simple process, given the widespread loss of life and lingering hatreds. "Just rehabilitating the kids and then sending them back to the village is not enough," says Djibril. Many African societies, including Djibril's own Mende people, have traditional ways of accepting wayward members back into the fold. He advises people helping former child soldiers to better utilize such customary rituals of "cleansing" and reconciliation. Mr. Legrand says this is beginning to happen, as reintegration efforts seek to "build on the local culture."

Education is key

Even community reintegration will not be sufficient if the children are unable to go to school or have other ways to acquire skills, jobs or financial opportunities, leaving them vulnerable to re-recruitment by armed factions. "The best way to support a child is to provide him with education and an opportunity for an income," insists Mr. Legrand. But in severely war-torn countries such as Sierra Leone, "we are most of the time dealing with communities where all basic services have been disrupted."

For that reason, he says, donors must look beyond the immediate problems and focus more on how to overcome the long-term impact of war. Unfortunately, "it's so difficult to mobilize donors around these issues. They want to provide emergency assistance in terms of food and basic health. [But] still they don't recognize the importance of providing children and their communities with an alternative to the economy of war."

Ms. Graça Machel, an expert on children in armed conflicts and a former first lady of Mozambique and South Africa, has argued that programmes to assist former child soldiers should last at least three years. In a September 2000 report, "The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children," she says this is necessary to address children's "longer-term needs for education, vocational training and psychosocial support. Unless children demobilized from armies are given alternatives to soldiering, they are likely to be recruited again into armed groups."

Even with the limited resources now available, a greater focus on education can bring modest benefits, observes Mr. Legrand. In southern Sudan, for example, some former child soldiers have received enough training to become teachers, helping provide education to an even younger generation and thus making them less susceptible to military recruitment.

In Sierra Leone as well, many of those who have been through the transit centres are leery of again taking up arms. In 2000, when the RUF briefly restarted the war, "they tried to recruit the children again," Mr. Legrand recalls. "They were very surprised by the resistance they met." ■

Child labour rooted in Africa's poverty

Campaigns launched against traffickers and abusive work

UNICEF / Raffika Chaloum

By **Ernest Harsch**

In some of the poorest provinces of Burkina Faso, villages are "haemorrhaging" their children, several local journalists reported after a recent tour through Sanguié, Nayala, Kossi and other parts of that West African nation. They uncovered a recurring story: countless children, mostly under the age of 14, have left their families in search of work elsewhere in the country or across the border in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. Some departed "voluntarily" or at the urging of their parents to escape the severe poverty of their home areas. Others were ensnared by labour traffickers.

In almost all cases, according to some of the children who managed to return, they ended up in arduous and poorly paid jobs on plantations or in domestic service, often at great risk to their health, sometimes beaten or prey to sexual predators. Eric Bationo, a child in Réo, was kidnapped in 1997 and did not come back until three years later, suffering from gangrene, according to his mother.

Faced with a clear increase in "such abominable practices," stated Mr. Boniface Coulibaly, secretary-general of Kadiogo province, "the highest authorities of our country could not simply cross their arms or close their eyes." In May, the national government ratified Convention 182 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) prohibiting the worst forms of child labour. And like a number of other countries in Africa, it launched a campaign, supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other agencies, to oppose the practice.

Local government authorities, child welfare experts, community leaders and rights activists have begun educating parents about the dangers of child labour. According to the ILO, slightly more than 51 per cent of all children in Burkina between the ages of 10 and 14 work, even though the labour code bars employment under 14.

Across Africa, there are an estimated 80 million child workers, a number that could rise to 100 million by 2015. Since the problem is closely linked to the continent's poverty, and can only be eliminated with increases in family incomes and children's educational opportunities, UNICEF, the ILO and other groups are focusing initially on the "worst forms" of child labour. These include forced labour and slavery, prostitution, employment in the drug trade and other criminal activities, and occupations that are especially dangerous to children's health and security.

Targeting traffickers

In April, news reports circulated internationally that a Nigerian-registered "slave ship" carrying 250 children was sailing off the coast of West Africa. When it finally docked in Benin, no children were actually found on board. Nevertheless, the furor aroused by the reports helped "put a spotlight" on the reality of child trafficking in the region, notes Mr. Alec Fyfe, a senior adviser on child labour for UNICEF. "Trafficking is beginning to get on the policy agenda," he told *Africa Recovery*.

Because trafficking tears children away from the protection of their families and communities, it is especially perilous to their well being. An ILO study issued in June found that child trafficking in West and Central Africa is on the rise. Reports from Benin, Burkina, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo suggest that most of the children are sent to other countries for domestic service, or put to work on plantations, in petty trade, as beggars and in soliciting. The trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation was also reported.

Trafficked children, the study found, were working between 10 and 20 hours a day, carrying heavy loads and operating dangerous tools. They often lack adequate food and drink. Nigeria reported that one out of five children trafficked in that country died of illness or accidents. Others contracted sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Although parents were sometimes persuaded by recruiters to send their children away to earn some extra income, often neither the children nor the parents were paid.

In fact, many such children are "treated like slaves," according to Dr. Rima Salah, UNICEF regional director for West and Central Africa. In a paper presented to a pan-African conference on "human trafficking" held in Nigeria in February, Dr. Salah agreed with the ILO assessment that child labour trafficking has become a "substantial problem" in the region. Among the reasons influencing the phenomenon, the paper listed:

- Poverty, "a major and ubiquitous causal factor," which greatly limits vocational and economic opportunities in rural areas in particular and pushes families to use all available avenues to increase their meagre incomes.
- Inadequate educational opportunities. "The motive for moving children from the protective envelope of the family is often the search for education rather than the search for work."
- Ignorance among families and children about the risks of trafficking.

- Migration of adults from villages to urban slums, which exposes their children to greater risks.
- High demand among employers for cheap and submissive child labour, especially in the informal sector.
- Ease of travel across regional borders.
- The desire of young people themselves to travel and explore.
- Inadequate political commitment, legislation and judicial mechanisms to deal with child traffickers.

Over the past year, however, African countries have been moving more systematically to counter this trend. In Nigeria, the national legislature has outlawed human trafficking, while Gabon has set up a national commission against child trafficking, headed by the vice-president. Côte d'Ivoire and Mali signed a cooperation accord to combat cross-border trafficking, which should improve the detection and tracking of trafficking networks and the repatriation of children who have been rescued. Mali has opened a special transit centre in Sikasso to receive repatriated children and provide special services, including psychological care, before reuniting them with their families.

Africa has the highest incidence of child labour in the world. According to the ILO, 41 per cent of all African children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in some form of economic activity.

Some programmes also emphasize mobilizing key sectors of society. In Burkina, officials of various ministries are meeting with local authorities, traditional chiefs and other village leaders in the worst-affected provinces. They aim to set up community "vigilance" structures against child trafficking. At the end of September, two civil servants in Balé province spotted a large group of children travelling with several adults. Suspicious, they questioned members of the group, and quickly determined that the 69 children — a few of them under the age of 10 and a big majority of them girls — were being transported to work on cotton plantations in Burkina's Sourou Valley. A soldier who happened to be passing by on a motorcycle took the adult traffickers into custody, while the children themselves were taken to the provincial capital for return to their parents.

In late June, the International Federation of Transport Workers urged its affiliated road, port and sea workers' unions to be on the alert against trafficking networks. "Since the traffickers use public transport," said the federation, "the contribution of your unions will prove important in the struggle against this despicable and shameless exploitation of our children.... Together, we can defeat child trafficking and forced labour."

'Poverty is the problem'

Child trafficking is only one of the more pernicious aspects of a much broader problem. Africa has the highest incidence of child labour in the world. According to the ILO, 41 per cent of all African children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in some form of economic activity, compared with 21 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America. Among girls, the participation rate also is the highest: 37 per cent in Africa, 20 per cent in Asia and 11 per cent in Latin America.

It is no coincidence that Africa also is the poorest region, with the weakest school systems. And among African children, those from poorer families are far more likely to seek work. A 1999 Child Labour Survey in Zimbabwe, conducted by the ILO, found that about 88 per cent of economically active children aged 5-17 came from households with incomes below Z$2,000 (US$36) per month. As family incomes rose above Z$3,000, the participation rate dropped to less than 1 per cent. Parents and guardians of working children, when asked why they let their children work, most often responded "to supplement household income" or "to help household in enterprise."

In Tanzania, too, parents often see little choice but to have their children help directly on their own farms or in informal sector activities. Ms. Leila Sheikh, director of the Tanzania Media Women's Association, states simply: "Poverty is the major problem."

According to an ILO study on Tanzania, the incidence of child labour in the country has risen partly because of the deterioration of the school system, itself a result of economic decline. Poor infrastructure, low teacher morale and the introduction of school fees under the country's structural adjustment programme have contributed to higher drop-out and truancy rates. This has brought down Tanzania's once-high primary enrolment rate: from 90 per cent in 1980 to 77.8 per cent in 1996. Thirty per cent of all children between 10 and 14 are not attending school, and many end up working. In villages around mining sites, the school drop-out rate is around 30–40 per cent.

AIDS is another contributing factor in many African countries. By killing so many breadwinners, it has driven more families deeper into poverty, placing an even greater burden on the survivors, including children. Asked about child labour on Tanzanian tea estates, Mr. Norman Kelly, general manager of the Brooke Bond plantation replied: "The adult workforce is fast diminishing because of the high incidence of HIV/AIDS among many workers."

A UNICEF study of six countries in Eastern and Southern Africa found that the "dissolution of families from HIV/AIDS increases the likelihood

of children being forced into exploitative labour.... Just when children should be in school, their burdensome new role as family breadwinner forces them to drop out."

Education and mobilization

Recognizing that the roots of child labour lie in family poverty — and that it cannot simply be legislated out of existence — the ILO draws a distinction "between normal family obligations and work which gives rise to exploitation and abuse." The UNICEF study on Eastern and Southern Africa similarly acknowledges that African culture allows children to work within the family and community, but economic hardships, HIV/AIDS and other disasters "have distorted traditional forms of child work into exploitative practices."

Since the conditions do not yet exist to end all types of child labour, the immediate challenge is to educate the public about the dangers to children of the most exploitative and abusive forms of child labour and to mobilize governments and societies to combat them.

UNICEF / Gerardo Pinzo

Educational poster in Tanzania against overworking of children.

Mr. Fyfe of UNICEF believes that this focus on the worst forms is useful in helping to set priorities and winning broad support from governments. He recalls that the ILO's Convention 138, which urged countries to set minimum ages of 14 or 15 years for regular employment, won support only slowly after its original adoption in 1973, with scarcely 40 governments ratifying it by the mid-1990s (a number that has since climbed to 112). But Convention 182 prohibiting the worst forms of child labour has won support very rapidly — it has been ratified by 100 countries in just two years. "It has worked in that strategic sense, in getting a global consensus," he observes.

Mr. Fyfe cautions, however, that an excessive focus on the worst forms of child labour may "cast into shadow" the broader problem. "Too much of a focus on the worst forms may be at the price of neglecting the more fundamental things you need to do, in terms of the macroeconomic environment, education and changing attitudes, which would actually undermine child labour itself."

With its years of experience in children's issues in Afric he says, UNICEF is well-positioned to address these broad contexts. In addition to its extensive work in children's educatio and health, it approaches the struggle against child labour a children's rights issue. For several years, UNICEF h been campaigning for universal birth registration, which hel children gain admission school and facilitates enforc ment of minimum-age regul tions. UNICEF's extensive pre ence in Africa has enabled it play an especially active role partnership with the ILO, whi has relatively few offices in t region. In Rwanda, for examp UNICEF persuaded the gover ment to ratify Convention 182

The immediate challenge is to educate the public about the dangers to children of the most exploitative and abusive forms of child labour and to mobilize governments and societies to combat them.

Numerous national pr grammes are now under way in Africa, involving the IL UNICEF, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unio and others. In Tanzania, a local project linked to the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour h made some progress in exposing the dangers faced by childr working in mines, where they were often used in narrow tunnels place dynamite for blasting. Thanks to the campaign, child labo has been virtually eliminated from the large mines, although it st exists in the smaller ones. The Tanzania Federation of Tra Unions has become involved in fighting for better and safer wo ing conditions for children on tobacco, tea and other plantation The federation also wants to reduce child labour, in part to saf guard the jobs of adult workers.

In Senegal, the national media has given extensive coverage child labour issues and a number of NGOs have mounted ca paigns. Three major Senegalese union federations have conduct investigations in all ten regions, focusing on sectors that are pa ticularly risky for children — including agriculture, fishing, tra port and tourism. At a two-day workshop in late July, the unio cited the risk of serious injuries posed in some occupations, t potential of sexual abuse of children working in domestic servi and the tourism trade, and the general psychological and develo mental problems that face such "precocious workers."

The federations decided to establish an Observato Intersyndical ("Inter-union Observatory") to monitor and comb the worst forms of child labour. It will work with other labo groups, employers' associations, parents and civil society orga zations to raise awareness about the problem. According to t Observatoire's vice-president, Mr. Macissé Lô, it also will take longer-term development perspective, to elaborate "alternati programmes aimed at overcoming educational shortcomings a improving the incomes of families who feel obliged to let th children work in such occupations."

Malawi battles AIDS orphan nightmare

Communities struggle to provide care, with few resources

By **Gumisai Mutume**

In a rural district along the shores of Lake Malawi, Ms. Catherine Phiri leads thousands of volunteers in a desperate rearguard battle against HIV/AIDS: feeding orphans, providing homecare, counselling and encouraging people to get tested. For six years, they have worked without financing from outside the area, relying on contributions from fellow villagers in this poor part of the continent.

"We can only bring the kids together once a week for a meal," says Ms. Phiri, founder of the Salima AIDS Support Organization (SASO). "Apart from that, there is very little more we can do because we do not have the money. There is no funding at all for our orphan-care programme." Set up in 1994 in response to the rising number of HIV infections in Malawi, where an estimated one in seven adults lives with the virus, SASO reaches 58,000 households in Salima.

It was only last year that SASO, with its 2,650 volunteers, secured a grant of about $30,000 for its AIDS awareness programmes, but that runs out at the end of the year. "Government helps," Ms. Phiri told *Africa Recovery*. "But it does not have a dedicated fund for orphan care." After her husband died of an AIDS-related illness in 1990, she publicly declared her HIV-positive status and set up SASO.

There are hundreds of similar community organizations run by volunteers in Malawi, part of an extensive network coordinated through a national orphan-care task force established by the government in 1991. They have set up centres where children play, learn, are immunized and their health is monitored. Village committees assist children in desperate need, especially those looked after by elderly grandparents or parents who are very ill.

"The 'grandmother phenomenon' is the dominant orphan programme for the moment, I think, in much of east and southern Africa," says Mr. Stephen Lewis, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. "It is a legitimate extended family arrangement and the kids by and large are related to one another and they are happy in that sense."

"Where they have turned it over to the broader community, rather than a grandmother or part of the extended family, the arrangements are often make-shift and ad-hoc and the kids are struggling," says Mr. Lewis. Of increasing concern to development planners is what happens when the grandparents die and, suddenly, child-headed households dominate.

Many orphans, little money

No one knows exactly how many AIDS orphans there are in Malawi. Estimates put the total number of orphans at 850,000 to 1.2 million, rising to 2 million by the end of next year.

Resources are lacking to handle this growing orphan crisis. The government can only afford to allocate $250,000 for the gender ministry's social welfare department this year, notes Mr. Penston Kilembe, who is in charge of orphan care. "It's inadequate. We need much, much more money than that because we are talking about survival, growth and the development of these children." The government relies on the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) for 80 per cent of its child-care programme budget.

UNICEF / Chris Schoyer

Mapopa N'Goma, one of nine siblings orphaned by AIDS, is now under the care of his grandmother in Kuanda, Malawi.

More than 365,000 Malawians have died of AIDS since 1985, when the virus was first diagnosed in this country of 10.6 million. Life expectancy has plunged from 52 years in 1990 to about 39 last year. The Joint UN Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) puts the adult infection rate in Malawi at 16 per cent.

Daunting challenges

The government acknowledges that its support "has been grossly inadequate and the condition of orphans is made worse by extreme poverty and the erosion of extended families." Malawi has, however, been praised for its humane and exemplary treatment of orphans despite the meagre resources.

UNICEF believes that political commitment is growing. President Bakili Muluzi is increasingly supportive of AIDS prevention and care programmes. In speeches, he frequently exhorts people

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AIDS orphans: facing Africa's 'silent crisis'

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Housing, feeding, educating and nurturing these children is both a moral imperative and essential to Africa's development prospects, Mr. Stephen Lewis, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, told *Africa Recovery*. "There has to be an Herculean effort made for these kids so we don't lose them." Otherwise, he cautioned, "you reap the whirlwind.... You have a society where kids haven't been to school and therefore can't fulfill even basic jobs ... a society where a large proportion can have anti-social instincts because their lives will have been so hard. You have a generation of children who will be more vulnerable to exploitation and to disease because they won't have the same sense of self-worth."

The needs of AIDS orphans are as immediate as their next meal and as extended as access to education, guidance and care until the end of their adolescent years. Speaking to leaders of industrialized countries at the July 2001 Group of Eight meeting in Genoa, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appealed for the resources "to care for all whose lives have been devastated by AIDS, particularly the orphans." The number of AIDS orphans exceeded 13 million globally, he noted, "and their numbers are growing."

UNICEF / Giacomo Pirozzi

AIDS orphans and other children drinking from a UNICEF-financed handpump in Chipata, Zambia.

Strengthening the family

In Zambia and other countries hit hardest by the pandemic, however, the traditional mechanism for the care of vulnerable children, the extended family, has started to break down under the twin pressures of poverty and disease.

Reinforcing the family, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director Carol Bellamy told *Africa Recovery*, is the only practical response to the crisis. "There are not enough orphanages in this world to take care of these kids," she noted. "We've got to strengthen the extended family." But a comprehensive 1999 study of what one researcher termed Zambia's "silent crisis" of orphans revealed just how difficult that can be in practice.

Part of the problem is financial. The pandemic has been both a cause and an effect of the country's deepening poverty and rising external debt, problems that have pushed many families to the very edge of survival and limited the government's ability to respond to the orphan crisis. Per capita income, just $490 in 1990, slumped to $330 by the end of the decade, while debt service payments consumed a larger share of the national budget last year than did health and education spending combined.

For many children, the loss of parents brings destitution, an end to schooling and stigmatization by family and neighbours. Despite the mounting death toll, nearly half of Zambia's orphans live in a household with one surviving parent, usually their mother. The high incidence of HIV infection within marriage, however, means that many children soon lose both parents, and become the responsibility of the extended family. About 40 per cent of these children are raised by grandparents, while about 30 per cent are reared by aunts and uncles.

The consequences for the family, however, can be devastating. One 70-year-old woman raising her 4 grandchildren told researchers that "ever since these children were brought to me I have been suffering. I am too old to look after them properly. I cannot cultivate ... and the food does not last the whole year."

"It is an unbelievable act of self-sacrifice on the part of the families because frequently it pushes them over the edge," acknowledged Mr. Lewis. "They have just enough for themselves and suddenly they take [in] two kids.... I don't think anybody imagined the unprecedented assault on the extended family system which has occurred in grievously affected countries. This is just a huge challenge."

Child-headed households, once a rarity in Zambia, are now increasingly common, but formal and traditional inheritance, land ownership, and health and education policies have not kept pace with their needs. "Our parents both died in 1995," one young Zambian woman told UNICEF researchers. "When this happened, our relatives ran away from us. This surprised us because, being our relatives, we thought they would care for us.... Our parents had a big farm, but it was taken from us so we had nowhere to grow food. My young brothers and sisters became beggars; they would walk from house to house asking for food."

Other children are taken in by neighbours, or find a bed in one of Zambia's very few orphanages or residential facilities. For the rest, there are only the streets of Zambia's cities, where children, lacking adult supervision and a stable home, survive by begging and petty crime.

Orphans or vulnerable children?

In Zambia, supporting the family's ability to raise orphans and other vulnerable children has been primarily a community effort. Over the nearly 20 years that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has spread through the country, hundreds of religious and community-based children's committees and homecare projects have been established to care for the sick and provide counseling and support for orphans and their families. The programmes are as diverse as the communities they serve. But in their various ways, virtually all attempt to help families meet two fundamental needs — food and education.

One of the first challenges communities face is determining what constitutes an orphan and which children should receive extra help. The 1999 study, supported by UNICEF and other donor groups, found that many Zambians consider children orphaned only if they do not live with an adult relative. In some communities children who have lost both parents but are under the care of some other relative may not be presumed to require special assistance unless they also are very poor. Many Zambians prefer the term "vulnerable children" to "orphan" because children with parents are often little better off in material terms than those whose parents have died, and are considered equally deserving of aid. The study found that while 75 per cent of orphaned children lived below the poverty line, so did 73 per cent of children with parents.

In one community, an external donor provided school fees and new uniforms for the children. The other students, however, could not afford new clothes. The resulting resentment isolated the orphans from their peers and raised tensions within the community. The same can occur within the extended family itself, where orphans under the care of an uncle may have access to benefits not available to the guardian's own children.

"When it comes to practical interventions," the study noted, "there is no useful purpose served by separating orphans from other vulnerable children. In fact, there are significant risks in so doing." Part of the challenge facing donors, researchers note, is that many programmes earmark benefits exclusively for orphans — entrenching these "significant risks" in the eligibility requirements.

Land and food

In rural areas, the government, religious and community organizations have worked with traditional leaders to keep vulnerable families on their land, and, where families are no longer able to provide for themselves, create sustainable nutrition programmes with local resources. In rural eastern Zambia, the Kanyanga Orphan Project (KOP) — originally established as an AIDS homecare programme — recognized an urgent need to improve the farming skills and nutrition of families with vulnerable children.

Traditional inheritance customs in the area usually allowed households headed by women and children to remain on their land, and the project initially supplied seeds, fertilizer and tools. When it became clear that families lacked the skills necessary to increase food production, the project hired a trained agronomist to improve agricultural techniques and yields. Originally conceived as a nutrition programme, KOP's farm project also became an important source of family income, allowing children to pay school fees, thereby reducing the financial burden on the community.

Nutrition projects in other parts of the country, however, have not fared as well. In Kitwe, the local Children in Distress committee (CINDI) established communally tended "orphan gardens" to generate income for vulnerable families and improve nutrition. But the gardens routinely produced less than gardens worked for personal benefit and failed to reduce dependence on donated food rations and other external relief programmes. In the view of UNICEF and other researchers, the community's inability to hire professional staff, coupled with awareness that relief supplies would make up for low yields in the gardens, contributed to the problem.

Child-headed households, once a rarity in Zambia, are now increasingly common, but formal and traditional inheritance, land ownership, and health and education policies have not kept pace with their needs.

The experiences of the Kanyanga and Kitwe nutrition projects reflect strengths and weaknesses in locally based responses to the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children. In both cases, communities identified a need and moved quickly to improvise a solution, drawing on local skills and available resources. But the differences in the outcomes in the two communities point to the need for greater access to outside skills and financial and technical support, and highlight the difficulty of replicating local successes on a wider scale.

Orphans and education

The Zambian government and civil society groups are finding similar challenges in trying to meet the educational needs of orphans and other vulnerable children. Although communities, parents and children themselves identify education as critical, the study noted in 1999, "It is perhaps in the area of education that government, donors and the development community have failed the Zambian child the most." Zambia's financial difficulties do not allow the government to provide free education. The government pays teachers' salaries, but local school management committees must cover operating costs by charging enrolment fees and setting requirements for uniforms. As a result, an end to education is often an early consequence of orphanhood and the loss of family income.

Children from poor families are most vulnerable. "Our records show most of the orphan children stopping school are those coming from poor families," noted a school headmaster in Katongo, Isoka.

In an effort to keep children in school, communities have developed three types of responses. The first is to lobby local school management committees to waive fees for the most vulnerable children. These efforts are often successful, but inevitably undermine the financial base of the school. At the Chimwemwe school in Kitwe, for example, fees were waived for 400 of the school's 1,500 students, reducing the operating budget by nearly a third.

A second community strategy is to raise money for orphans' school fees. Bursaries have the advantage of keeping schools solvent, but usually compel local committees to design and manage successful income-generating projects. With notable exceptions, however, communities often find they lack the management skills, start-up capital and marketing opportunities to run projects profitably. In many cases, community-initiated income projects lose money and drain volunteer committees of limited time and energy. Zambian government, donor and NGO advocates agree that improving communities' ability to generate operating revenue is vital, but it remains a long-term goal.

A third approach is the Open Community Schools programme — community-run schools without fees or dress codes created for vulnerable children using volunteer teachers, donated space and a curriculum that compresses the first six years into just three. Initially launched as an innovative government-community partnership to provide education to orphans and other vulnerable children, the schools were intended as adjuncts to the public school system rather than alternatives. Students were expected to return to the state system at year seven.

The success of the open schools triggered a rapid increase in their numbers, but often at the cost of educational quality. The reliance on volunteer staff meant that teachers were often absent, and left the school entirely when paid employment became available. As important as such stopgap measures are, educators argue, only a national system of free and compulsory public education can equip the next generation with the skills needed for development.

Institutionalizing responses, not kids

The Kaoma Cheshire Home serves an area with the largest number of orphans in the country and is among the few programmes to provide institutional care for infants orphaned by AIDS. Yet it too aims to return the children to their communities as soon as circumstances permit, usually between the ages of two and three.

If there is consensus among advocates and service providers about the dangers of institutionalizing orphans and other vulnerable children, there is equally broad recognition of the need to systematize and coordinate international, national and local responses. This role is increasingly being assumed by the Zambian government, with support from UNICEF and UNAIDS. At the national level, the Department of Public Welfare coordinates a steering committee of NGOs, civil society organizations and community-based providers to identify needs, direct technical and material resources where they are most needed and develop a policy framework that responds to the complex needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

There are also efforts under way to better use the resources of Zambian civil society groups, which have long grappled with the orphan crisis and accumulated valuable experience in mobilizing people throughout the country to become involved. But unless a major increase in financial, technical and human resources occurs, said Mr. Lewis, the future of Africa's orphaned children is bleak.

"So many of the kids have gone through the desperate, traumatic ordeal of looking after a mother who literally dies in the child's arms," he observed. "They feel so abandoned. The little ones, the 4 and 5 and 6-year-olds, with these great big eyes, their little voices engaging you in this quiet whispered conversation — and you're trying to figure out what can be done for this seemingly endless roll-call of children. Communities try to make arrangements where kids can spend some time together, to have one meal if they can manage. But it's all very fragile.... Communities are so [besieged] by the dying and the death and the poverty," he noted, "that there just isn't enough time and concern focused on orphans, and there must be." Sometimes, he concluded, "it can be emotionally overwhelming." ■

Malawi orphans

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to change their behaviour. He and his vice-president have both adopted AIDS orphans.

In 1992, Malawi became the first country in the region to develop guidelines for orphan care. These are being used as an example in neighbouring countries. They recommend that orphans be kept within their communities, and argue that government should be at the centre of national orphan-care activities.

But the government is losing many of its workers to AIDS. The health ministry estimates that by 2005 between 25 and 50 per cent of workers in urban areas will die of AIDS. While the rates of infection are higher in urban areas, the number of people infected is greater in the rural areas, where 85 per cent of the population lives. There, HIV/AIDS is presenting a daunting development challenge, diverting labour from farming into care provision, increasing food insecurity and threatening the survival of entire communities.

Breaking the poverty cycle

"Our biggest problem is poverty," says Mr. Kilembe. "At least 65 per cent of our people live below the poverty line. Many are unable to take on the responsibilities of extra children because they are already strained." Malawi's average annual per capita income is $200 — less than half the $500 average for sub-Saharan Africa.

Many of Malawi's poor children are not in school because they cannot afford to go. In 1994 the government abolished tuition fees for primary education, leading to an increase in enrolment from 1.9 million to 3.2 million the following year. But for many, the road ends there. Only a fifth of primary school graduates make it into high school. The danger of a generation of uneducated adults is all too obvious to development planners.

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes, of UNICEF Malawi, says the main approach to orphan care should shift from vocational training to formal education. "When you go and speak to many of these children, they tell you what they really want is an opportunity to go to school," says Ms. Hughes. "We have to find a way of keeping them in school." ■

New African Initiative stirs cautious hope

Praise and scepticism for continental development plan

By **Ernest Harsch**

"Hugely ambitious" and "very difficult" was how South African President Thabo Mbeki characterized Africa's twin plans for socio-economic development and political union. Many of his fellow presidents and prime ministers — gathered in Lusaka, Zambia, for a summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — shared that sense of the daunting challenges ahead as they try to change the way African countries interact with each other and with the rest of the world.

At the political level, Africa's leaders intend to transform the OAU into a more effective continent-wide institution, the African Union, over the next year (see box, page 22). Simultaneously, they aim to promote an innovative "made-in-Africa" development strategy known as the New African Initiative. It incorporates two draft plans put forward by different African presidents earlier this year, the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme and the Omega Plan (see *Africa Recovery*, June 2001), which were merged into a single, common framework just before the OAU's 9-11 July Lusaka summit.

The Initiative's overall goal, declared the assembled heads of state, will be to achieve "human-centred and sustainable development," while also ensuring that Africa becomes more than a marginal player in the world economy. Key to this, notes the Initiative, will be better leadership and governance. "African peoples have begun to demonstrate their refusal to accept poor economic and political leadership." Although many of the fine points of the Initiative are still to be worked out, the broad outlines of the strategy have been set (see page 24).

A new partnership?

The Initiative commits African governments to more energetically raise financial resources from within the continent itself, through improved taxation, greater efficiency, and higher domestic investment and savings rates. But it also calls for "a new relationship of partnership between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries, to overcome the development chasm that had widened over centuries of unequal relations."

A number of African leaders have been traveling abroad to press for quicker and deeper debt relief, more development assistance, greater foreign investment, and improved access of African exports to Northern markets. At a high-level session devoted to Africa in July, the UN Economic and Social Council (see page 25) heard World Bank President James Wolfensohn praise the New African Initiative as "of enormous importance for every citizen of the world." He pledged that the World Bank would support its call for programmes that are "home-grown and home-owned. We recognize that top-down development imposed from Washington or London or Geneva will not work." Although the Bank would continue to attach conditions to its lending, he said, it would seek to "streamline conditionality." It also will give greater support to developing and deepening regional integration within Africa, rather than focusing almost exclusively on national projects, as it has in the past.

'Aiding Africa is not charity'

The following week, a delegation of African leaders led by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal pitched the Initiative to the annual summit of the Group of Eight industrialized countries in Genoa, Italy. "For the first time in the G8," said French President Jacques Chirac, "Africa was seriously addressed." UK Prime Minister Tony Blair called on donors to initiate a "kind of Marshall plan" for Africa, referring to the large infusion of funds that helped rebuild Europe following World War II.

Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, acting president of the European Union, observed: "There is a political will on the part of the rich [countries] to join in partnership action with the African continent. Until now, that wasn't the case. After three days of discussions, everyone, including the American President George Bush, was aware of the chasm between the North and the South, between the rich of the G8 and Africa."

The G8 welcomed the New African Initiative as a promising basis for stronger partnership. It also adopted a "Genoa Plan for Africa," which highlights areas of particular interest to the industrialized countries: promoting private investment, expanding trade within Africa and externally, improving public health systems, overcoming hunger, ensuring sound management of economic enterprises, introducing new technologies, combating corruption, achieving good governance and preventing conflicts. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, who will host the next G8 summit in Canada, pledged that Africa will be its central theme. "Aiding Africa is not

SAPA Press

Developing country presidents at Group of Eight summit in Genoa (left to right): Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal), Francisco Flores Pérez (El Salvador), Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria), Alpha Oumar Konaré (Mali, partially hidden), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Thabo Mbeki (South Africa).

charity," he said, "it's an investment."

The G8 members plan to prepare more concrete partnership proposals by next year's summit. In the meantime, they also aim to engage in on-going dialogue with a 15-member committee of African heads of state. That committee, chaired by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, is to formulate specific programmes for implementing the New African Initiative, also in time for the 2002 summit of the G8.

African leaders attending the Genoa summit got a glimpse of the passions aroused by the G8's international economic policies, as security forces clashed with "anti-globalization" demonstrators, leading to many injuries and one death among the protesters. President Wade criticized the "violence" of a wing of the protest movement, but also expressed sympathy with their ideals. "It is true that capitalist rules, applied blindly, generate intolerable situations," he said. Yet he urged protesters to "be realistic" in their demands, since "such rules govern the world." He also predicted that "the current critique of capitalism" will gain ground in developing countries and "will one day win over the youth of Senegal. There is a danger they will consider reform [of the international economic system] as not coming fast enough, or not moving in a good direction. I will have to manoeuvre so that they do not turn against me."

Greater acquisition of information and communications technology will be essential for strengthening Africa's ability to compete globally.

Debating pros and cons

As Mr. Wade's remarks suggested, promoters of the New African Initiative are keenly aware that whatever backing it might garner internationally, it must above all win active support from the people of Africa if it is to have a chance of success.

Since the Millennium Programme and Omega Plan were first floated earlier in the year, and then merged into the Initiative, African policy-makers, academics, development practitioners, media commentators, trade unionists, civil society activists and many others have been debating their merits and shortcomings. Many have expressed cautious hope that the Initiative might indeed represent a new departure for the continent. If peace and political stability can be achieved and if the industrialized countries follow through on their promises, the Initiative "should lay a solid foundation for Africa to assert itself in the mainstream spheres of global economic, political and cultural affairs," commented Mr. Kuseni Dlamini, a research associate with the South African Institute of International Affairs.

Some, however, are more sceptical. They express concern over the negative impact that globalization may have in Africa and lack confidence in African leaders' political commitment to their own plans. The Initiative "is the right thing to do at the right time," declared an editorial in the Gambian daily *Independent*. But the newspaper worried that foreign investors would not be attracted to a continent with "so much unrest and lawlessness" and doubted that the new African Union would be any more effective than the OAU.

Transforming the Organization of African Unity into the African Union

"Guided by our common vision of a united and strong Africa," the continent's leaders have decided to transform the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into a new, more ambitious African Union. The July summit in Lusaka, Zambia, was to be the OAU's last. According to the Constitutive Act of the AU, African leaders acknowledge the need to "build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society," to combat the scourge of conflicts, and to "promote and protect human rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and to ensure good governance and the rule of law."

After years of growing realization that the OAU's structures — first set up in 1963 — were not up to the task, African leaders first issued a call for the formation of the African Union in Sirte, Libya, in September 1999. The next OAU summit in Lomé, Togo, then adopted the Constitutive Act and submitted it for signature and ratification by the OAU's 53 member states. After obtaining ratification from two-thirds of the membership, the AU was officially proclaimed in March 2001.

Although legally in existence, the AU and its various institutions remain to be built. Leaders gathered in Lusaka mainly to discuss the transitional and preparatory steps needed before the first AU summit, to be held next year in South Africa. Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the long-time OAU secretary-general, was replaced by Mr. Amara Essy, a former foreign minister of Côte d'Ivoire (and a former president of the UN General Assembly), who will lead the transition. The main changes will include:

- Creating the AU's key organs, among them an Assembly, Executive Council, Commission, and Permanent Representatives Committee
- Incorporating and bolstering the existing Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which the OAU established in 1993
- Elaborating the structures and responsibilities of a Pan-African Parliament. Such a parliament was first approved in the protocol to the 1991 Abuja treaty estab-

Stronger focus on regional integration

Prof. Moustapha Kasse, dean of economics at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, noted that earlier OAU economic development programmes, such as the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, failed for a variety of reasons, not just the deficiencies of African governments. These included a deterioration in the international economic environment, lack of support from donor countries — which preferred to push structural adjustment policies instead — drought, the outbreak of civil wars, and the tendency of each African country to look after its own short-term interests, to the detriment of any overarching continental vision.

Mr. Kasse believes that the approach taken in the New African Initiative reflects some of the lessons of past failures. The Initiative, he notes, acknowledges that economic growth and development are not influenced by financial and productive factors alone, but also by political and social ones. This is reflected in the Initiative's emphasis on peace, good governance and women's advancement. Of particular importance, Mr. Kasse emphasizes, is the focus on ways to increase trade, transport links, and joint investment projects among African countries. Greater regional integration, he points out, will expand local markets, making it easier to realize economies of scale, attract greater investment for infrastructure, and permit a more optimal division of resources.

Similarly, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, argues that accelerated regional integration "can facilitate the pooling of risks between otherwise vulnerable economies and enable the continent to exploit complementarities and attract the levels of investment required to sustain economic growth and development in Africa." This in turn could open a "gateway for our continent to enter the competitive global market."

More railways and roads are needed between African countries, to facilitate regional integration.

Economic integration in Africa will take quite some time to achieve, however. Mr. Tito Mboweni, elected in mid-August as the new president of the Association of African Central Bank Governors, predicts that it may require two more decades before Africa will be ready for a single currency and a continent-wide central bank. It took Europe more than 30 years to establish a single currency, he notes, but with "a consistent programme and organized approach, these goals are achievable."

According to South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Zuma, in order to lay the foundation for economic integration across Africa, it is important now to strengthen Africa's existing regional groupings, such as the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States. "If the regional blocs are weak, then the economic integration of the continent will be weak," she says.

On trade, President Obasanjo of Nigeria points out that African countries must work more energetically to "re-shape trade relations" among themselves. In West Africa, the liberalization of trade across borders already has led to a notable increase in commercial relations among regional neighbours over the past decade. In addition, Mr. Obasanjo insists, African countries must better coordinate their negotiating positions to have a stronger voice in world trade talks.

Fears of globalization

Largely because of the prevailing inequities of world trade and financial markets, the New African Initiative's emphasis on better integrating Africa into the globalization process has stirred some anxiety and criticism. "Free trade, along with deregulation and liberalization of markets, privatization and globalization ... threatens to condemn the people of the South to eternal poverty and subjugation," argues Mr. Abie Ditlhake, executive director of the South African National NGO Coalition (Sangoco), a coordinating body of non-governmental organizations. "Rather than challenge the prevailing neo-liberal hegemony, African countries appear ready to offer the continent as a sacrificial lamb."

Similarly, Mr. Mamadou Dia, who was president of Senegal's Council of Ministers shortly after the country's independence in 1960, maintains that the New African Initiative's emphasis on trade and foreign investments will open "Africa's door even more widely to multinationals, to improve their ability to exploit our material and human resources."

Mr. Sipho Seepe, a columnist for South Africa's *Mail and Guardian*, directed a similar criticism against the Millennium Programme. Rather than charting a new course, he argued, it represented a "recycling of ideas" and demonstrated "blind faith" in the willingness of developed countries to help Africa. "It is naive to

lishing an African Economic Community (which came into force in 1994), but its specific details, including the election of representatives, will need to be worked out

- Determining the structures and criteria for membership in an Economic, Social and Cultural Council, comprising non-governmental organizations, socio-economic and professional associations and civil society groups
- Laying the basis for a Pan-African Court of Justice
- Outlining the duties and functions of various specialized agencies and technical committees of the AU.

assume that the glaring global economic inequalities are mere accidents of history, divorced from the dictates of political and economic interests," he wrote. "If anything, it is the policies of the rich countries that have strangled the economies of poor countries."

Some of Africa's trade unions have strenuously resisted privatization and trade liberalization and oppose any further reduction of the state in favour of the private sector. "We know that the state played important roles in the development of infrastructure in developed countries," comments Mr. John Odah, acting general secretary of the Nigerian Labour Congress. "But now, we developing countries are being told we can't have that. Our governments are being told to cut spending on education, health, communication and others. How then can we develop?"

'We will determine our own destiny'

Attainment of Africa's long-term development goals is anchored in the determination of African peoples "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world," says the introduction to the New African Initiative. In launching this strategy, "Africans are appealing neither for the further entrenchment of dependency through aid, nor for marginal concessions." Instead, states the Initiative, "We will determine our own destiny," through "bold and imaginative leadership" and by harnessing all available capital, technology and human skills. It calls for a new relationship between Africa and the international community, in which the non-African partners seek to complement Africa's own efforts.

The document — which is not yet in its final form — combines two earlier plans, the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme launched by the presidents of South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria, and the Omega Plan, initiated by Senegal's president. In August, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal met with a multi-country group of experts to map out further work on the Initiative. While special "task teams" will elaborate concrete implementation strategies in specific priority areas, other experts will sharpen and refine the overall Initiative. Their goal is to finish by the time of the Group of Eight summit, scheduled for June 2002 in Canada, and to present the final Initiative to the UN General Assembly at some point during its 2001-02 session. (A preliminary version of the New African Initiative is available on the Web: <www.polity.org.za/govdocs/misc/mapomega.html>.)

The Initiative recognizes that colonialism left Africa with weak states and poorly developed private sectors. And while the globalization process has made it more difficult for Africa to compete internationally, the Initiative's promoters believe that "the advantages of an effectively managed integration [into the global economy] present the best prospects for future economic prosperity and poverty reduction."

For Africa to develop, argues the Initiative, three conditions need to be met: peace, security, democracy and good political governance; improved economic and corporate governance; and regional cooperation and integration. The Initiative identifies several priority sectors requiring particular attention and action:

- physical infrastructure, especially roads, railways and power systems linking neighbouring countries
- information and communications technology
- human development, focusing on health and education, including skills development
- agriculture
- promoting diversification of production and exports, with a focus on market access for African exports to industrialized countries.

To make significant progress in those sectors, Africa will need to mobilize more resources. This can be done, the Initiative says, through a combination of African and external efforts. African countries themselves can take steps to increase national savings by firms and households, ensure more effective tax collection, rationalize government expenditures, and reverse the flow of capital flight, in part by improving the conditions for domestic investments. The international community can assist, most immediately by significantly increasing flows of official development assistance, although such aid needs to be significantly reformed, since the way it is currently delivered "itself creates serious problems for developing countries." Creditors also should provide more debt relief, both for countries qualifying under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative and for those outside that debt-relief framework. In addition, more foreign investment is important, says the Initiative, but given the current difficulties of attracting private capital flows to Africa, it can only be a "longer-term" answer to the continent's resource gap. Whatever help it can get from external partners, concludes the Initiative, "Africa recognizes that it holds the key to its own development."

Peace and democracy

Among almost all commentators, there was broad agreement with the New African Initiative's insistence on achieving peace and consolidating democracy. Africa's vision can be realized, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told the OAU summit, but only on one condition: "that we end Africa's conflicts, without which no amount of aid or trade, assistance or advice, will make the difference."

Some of the critics of the Initiative argued that the way it was developed — by a handful of African presidents, without much public discussion — did not reflect commitment to the stated goals of democracy and people's participation. Responding, Mr. Sipho Pityana, South Africa's director-general of foreign affairs and a veteran anti-apartheid leader, acknowledged that it was an initiative of African leaders. "But this does not prevent broader participation," he added. He urged people to debate the Initiative and offer constructive ideas to improve it.

Others have echoed the call. Mr. Dia recommended that NGOs, unions, anti-debt campaigners and human rights activists in Senegal and other countries form an "African citizens' movement" to put pressure on the new institutions created by the African Union, so that they will be "at the service of the peoples of Africa." Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, acting secretary-general of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, urged industry executives to pressure governments to adopt policies to facilitate economic integration.

At a conference of African women in Dakar in late July, Ms. Amastou Sow Sidibé, president of the Réseau africain des femmes travailleuses (African Network of Women Workers), encouraged participants to examine how they could "better adapt" the New African Initiative to women's fundamental interests. Among other things, they recommended applying a gender approach to all development policies and programmes, increasing girls' school enrolment rates, banning genital mutilation, providing more AIDS information and training, combating high maternal and infant mortality rates and involving women in all peace initiatives. ■

African initiative challenges the UN

International community to explore best ways to support new African plan

The New African Initiative will not only require considerable commitment by Africans, but also will pose "a challenge by Africa to the international community, to the United Nations and its members, to make available the means necessary for the continent's development," declared Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, president of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in mid-July. He was addressing a three-day high-level session of ECOSOC in Geneva, Switzerland, devoted specifically to examining the UN's role in supporting African development efforts.

Many of the speakers alluded in one way or another to the New African Initiative, seeing it as an important, positive move by Africans to take charge of their own development strategies. Mr. Koos Richelle, director-general for development of the European Community, declared that Europe welcomed the initiative as "a concerted step forward in the areas of poverty eradication and sustainable growth and development." World Bank President James Wolfensohn and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Horst Köhler both pledged their organizations' backing. "The IMF stands ready with its expertise and resources," said Mr. Köhler, "to cooperate actively in the process and provide strong support for this African vision and work programme." World Trade Organization Director-General Mike Moore acknowledged some of the difficulties African countries are facing in gaining access for their exports to the markets of the industrialized world.

The African Group of ambassadors to the UN agreed that "imbalances in the global trading system, including in a number of WTO agreements, constitute serious impediments to growth and development in Africa," and urged "special and deferential treatment" for African exports. Mr. Belinga-Eboutou also highlighted the problems of attracting foreign investment to Africa. "Last year alone, Africa saw a spectacular 13 per cent drop in foreign direct investment," he noted.

"Imbalances in the global trading system, including in a number of WTO agreements, constitute serious impediments to growth and development in Africa."

— African Group

Since private capital flows cannot be counted on to fill Africa's financing gap, argued Mr. Rubens Ricupero, secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the continent must be supported with greater official development assistance and debt relief. It is therefore vital to turn around the "perverse trend" in which aid is dwindling, and much of the aid that still is given is used to service Africa's debt. "It may sound paradoxical, but the only way to end aid dependency is in the first instance by using more aid," Mr. Ricupero stated. And if aid is used more effectively, it could "generate a positive momentum that in due course will make aid superfluous."

Beyond improved financing and trade, African ownership of its own policies is a key goal of the New African Initiative, said Nigerian Foreign Minister Sule Lamido, reading a statement by President Olusegun Obasanjo. In the past, the World Bank, IMF, and donor agencies designed some of the economic policy models implemented by African countries. "The major cause of the failure of these models," Mr. Obasanjo's statement said, "was the use of pure economic logic to address problems that were often found out to be sometimes political, socio-cultural, and often very complex."

If the UN system is to better support Africa's own chosen goals and strategies, it too must make some changes, a number of speakers affirmed. "The way the United Nations does business must change," declared Mr. Kwesi Ndoum, Ghana's minister of economic planning and regional cooperation. He urged more UN collaboration with civil society organizations and the private sector. Mr. Charles Ntwaagae, Botswana's ambassador in Geneva, recommended greater flexibility and responsiveness in UN operational activities. Next year's final review of the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s "will provide us with the ideal opportunity to ensure that future UN programmes and initiatives work in support of the New African Initiative," said South African Minister of Communications Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri.

African textile factory: exports of manufactured goods often face high tariffs in the North.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan vowed that the UN system would more energetically speak out on behalf of Africa's development needs. "We must make ourselves Africa's advocates," he declared, for improved market access, increased aid, faster debt relief, more foreign investment, and "the prompt repatriation of the illegally acquired wealth which was transferred to Western banks by some corrupt African leaders and officials." ■

Whither the debt?

Despite HIPC, African countries still struggle with heavy debt payments

By **Gumisai Mutume**

The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative will not go far enough to relieve Tanzania's external debt, Finance Minister Basil Mramba recently told parliament. While the programme has provided some relief during the last two years, he said, Tanzania still owes billions of dollars to its foreign lenders. Under current conditions, it would take a long time for the country to get rid of its debt.

Tanzania's situation mirrors that of many other sub-Saharan African countries that have qualified for debt relief — a substantial lowering of debt initially, with rising obligations as new money is borrowed to service old debt and finance basic development programmes.

After receiving assistance from HIPC, sponsored by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), Tanzania's external debt fell from $3.8 bn in mid-1999 to $2.6 bn this year, expressed in "net present value" (npv, representing the market value of the original debt, discounted as if it were paid now, in a lump sum). However, relief is likely to be temporary, since savings will be spread out over 20 years and Tanzania must continue to borrow. Its debt could increase to $3.2 bn by 2005, and to $6 bn by 2015 (npv), when it will face service charges of $260 mn a year compared with $193 mn prior to HIPC (see table, this page).

African qualifiers

Worldwide, 23 countries have qualified for debt relief under HIPC, and according to World Bank estimates will eventually obtain a reduction in their debt of $20.3 bn (npv). For the 19 African HIPC countries, the savings will be $14.8 bn (npv), a significant figure compared with previous debt-relief schemes.

However, in Africa, only Mozambique and Uganda had qualified for "full" relief by October 2001, with their creditors writing off all the debts agreed to under the initiative. Another 17 African countries are receiving provisional relief while they work to fully meet HIPC's terms. As a result, the World Bank reports, repayments on the remaining debts of the 19 countries fell from $1.7 bn to $1.3 bn in the last year, while social spending rose from $2.6 bn to $3.2 bn in the same period, partly because the savings were spent on health and education, as required under HIPC (see box, page 27). The 17 countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia.

What is HIPC?

The initial HIPC plan was adopted in 1996 as a way in which donors could reduce the debts of the world's 41 most highly indebted poor countries to "sustainable" levels — levels that countries could afford to service. Africa is home to 33 of these nations. In 1999, HIPC II was adopted, making it easier for countries to meet the qualifying conditions, including implementing World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programmes. It also attempted to simplify the process countries needed to complete, in cooperation with the Bank, to formulate national strategies for reducing poverty. These Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) detail how the money saved will be spent on the social sector.

To qualify for HIPC, the ratio between a country's debt and its exports should be no higher than 150 per cent. Where the ratio of debt-to-revenues is used instead, this should not exceed 250 per cent. By the Bank's reckoning, a country with a ratio lower than 150 per cent is earning enough export revenue to service its debt. The debt is therefore sustainable.

Jubilee Plus, a London-based debt activist group, has concluded, after analysing World Bank data, that at least 15 African countries will continue to face unsustainable levels of debt after receiving HIPC relief. The Bank's definition of "sustainable debt," the Group states, fails to include new debt which the poorest countries must continue to borrow in order to pay charges on their remaining "old" debts and to run their countries.

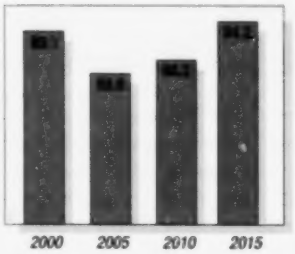
No 'exit' under HIPC

Jubilee Plus and others make the case that HIPC does not provide deep enough relief. In using only debt-to-export or debt-to-revenue figures, the Bank both sets the ratios too high to be serviced sustainably and also fails to consider vital ongoing obligations such as key social and infrastructure spending that must be met by the poorest countries. Under these circumstances, HIPC cannot provide an "exit from current debt problems," the debt activists maintain, and long-term debt sustainability under HIPC "is a mirage."

Only three countries — Benin, Mozambique and Uganda — will meet the Bank's criteria for

Post-HIPC debt servicing

Average annual payments for 10 countries,* $mn



* *Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Zambia*

Source: UN Africa Recovery from World Bank, IMF estimates.

Debt servicing of 17 African countries

Estimates, $mn

	2000	2005	2010	2015
Benin	62.5	36.9	43.9	72.8
Burkina Faso	33.8	41.5	54.7	83.2
Cameroon	312	347	375	n.a.
Gambia, The	19.6	9.8	18.7	23.4
Guinea	140	88	96	111
Guinea-Bissau	15	4	11	n.a.
Madagascar	104.5	81.6	119.5	156.2
Malawi	n.a.	47.1	55	85.9
Mali	88	66	76	125
Mauritania	87.4	43.3	n.a.	47.3
Mozambique	50	60	97	98
Niger	93.5	29	26.4	35.4
Rwanda	39.6	11.1	14.7	27.7
São Tomé & Príncipe	n.a.	1	3.3	2.8
Senegal	184.9	136.1	n.a.	n.a.
Tanzania	153.8	158.2	n.a.	258
Zambia	169	202	135	109

Source: World Bank, IMF.

"sustainable" debt shortly after receiving HIPC assistance. For others, it could take some years. Tanzania's debt is expected to reach "sustainable" levels by 2007 and, from 2009 to 2018, it could be 25 per cent lower than without HIPC. However, Burkina Faso's debt, which was reduced to $655 mn last year and should become sustainable by 2007, will again spiral upwards to $1.3 bn (npv) by 2015. Of this, more than $1 bn will be in new debt; the rest will be principal and interest on old debts. Neither Malawi nor Niger will carry sustainable debt before 2013.

"In terms of long-term sustainability ... I want to note that what the HIPC initiative purports to do is basically bring the countries in question to a situation where they would have a good chance to carry on and remain sustainable over time," says Mr. Jacob Kolster, programme manager of the HIPC Unit at the World Bank. In April, the Fund and World Bank recognized that while HIPC can substantially reduce external debt, "long-term debt sustainability will only be achieved if the fundamental causes that triggered the debt build-up in the first place have been redressed."

Whose failure?

The Bank and the Fund note that the "fundamental causes" include failed economies, a reluctance by African governments to consistently implement prescribed economic reforms and their inability to attract foreign investment.

"The solutions to the debt crisis have been confined to issues of good governance and economic reforms, yet it is well known that Zambia's debt, for example, has greatly resulted from poor terms of trade and international political situations, such as its role in the anti-apartheid struggle," says Ms. Charity Musamba, coordinator of the non-governmental group, Jubilee-Zambia. "Unless a holistic perspective is adopted, these outside pressures will continue to lead Zambia into further external debt."

Such outside pressures include poor prices for African commodities on the international market. Based on its own market projections, the World Bank believes revenue in HIPC countries will rise from $12 bn in 1999 to $22 bn in 2005, with average annual GDP growth rates of 5-6 per cent between 2000 and 2005. Yet from 1990 to 1999, actual growth rates averaged 2.1 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, and current prospects for growth in Africa remain bleak (see box, page 4).

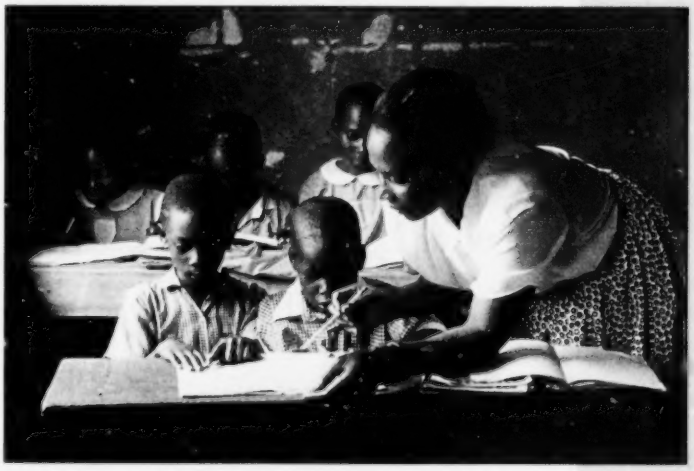
'Wildly optimistic' forecasts

The Bank's optimistic forecasts are unlikely to be met, in part because of the continuing slide in the prices of primary commodities, on which most HIPC countries depend for much of their revenue. Uganda depends on coffee for 60 per cent of its export revenues, but the price of the crop has declined by 70 per cent since 1997. The price of groundnuts has fallen by 15 per cent over the same period, with Guinea-Bissau depending on the crop for 70 per cent of export earnings and Malawi, for 60 per cent.

Oxfam, an international aid agency, notes the Bank's "wildly optimistic growth projections" are undermining the effectiveness of HIPC relief, since the amount of debt relief provided is directly linked to anticipated revenues.

In considering the notion of "failed economies," debt activists often point critically to the structural adjustment programmes which the Bank and IMF have obliged many African states to implement. Despite evidence that these programmes have not only reduced the role of the state in economic life but have also failed to reduce poverty or significantly stimulate economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, their prescriptions continue to be mandatory for all HIPC countries. They are incorporated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) that each country must prepare in order to qualify for HIPC, and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) through which the IMF finances adjustment programmes.

"Countries that want debt relief through the HIPC programme must enter into a Faustian bargain: for debt relief in the future, comply immediately with several years of IMF/World Bank programmes — the same ones that have meant increased debt and more desperate



UNICEF / Giacomo Pirozzi

Primary school in Uganda: thanks to savings from debt relief, spending on education and other social sectors has increased.

Channelling debt savings to social development

Some HIPC countries have been able to divert resources saved from debt servicing under HIPC to boost spending on health and education. In 1996, Mauritania spent $125 mn on debt service and $80 mn on education, health and poverty reduction combined. Last year, after qualifying for interim HIPC relief, debt costs fell to $88 mn while $97 mn was spent on social services. In order for Mauritania to receive full relief it is required to spend its savings on raising primary school enrolment rates. During the last decade, the rate has risen from 45 to 86 per cent. The goal is 99 per cent attendance by 2005.

In April 1998, Uganda became the first country to benefit under HIPC. Last May, it also qualified for full debt relief under HIPC II. Its debt fell from $2.4 bn to $1.7 bn (npv). Spending on social activities grew from 5 to 7 per cent of GNP between 1998 and 2000. The education budget rose from 17 to 20 per cent of government spending during the same period. Also in 1998, Uganda established the Poverty Action Fund to finance programmes aimed at eradicating poverty. From 1998 to 2000, the government's contribution to this fund increased from 4 to 13 per cent of total expenditure. Uganda benefited from debt relief at a time when the country was transforming its education system. As part of its development strategy, Uganda introduced free primary schooling in 1997 for up to four children per household. Enrolment immediately doubled to 5.2 million and, by 1999, had reached 6.5 million.

circumstances for the middle and lower classes in their countries," says Kenyan activist Ms. Njogi Njoroge Njehu of the 50 Years Is Enough Network, a Washington-based network critical of the policies of the Bank and the Fund.

Grants instead of loans

To help the poorest nations escape the trap of increasing debt, activists are looking to the Bank to provide grants rather than new loans. Earlier this year, US President George W. Bush proposed that the debt crisis could be resolved if the Bank gave at least half its financial support to the poorest countries in grants. "Debt relief is really a short-term fix," Mr. Bush said in an address to the World Bank in July. "The proposal today doesn't merely drop the debt, it helps stop the debt."

The US is the Bank's largest shareholder. It appears unwilling to support Mr. Bush's proposal with the necessary new funds. Were it accepted, it would affect only a portion of new Bank loans and would not make an impact on the 46 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's debt that is lent directly by countries.

Many of the donor countries that oppose Mr. Bush's proposal prefer that a maximum of 10 per cent of Bank lending be in grants and they say that the development banks — such as the African Development Bank — should continue to generate income through loans.

Spreading debt relief beyond HIPC

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is among those calling for the extension of debt relief to non-HIPC countries. "More money is flowing out of these poor countries to service debt than is going in," Mr. Annan told a press conference in July. "So I hope that debt relief, which has been on the agenda of the industrialized nations for many years, will be accelerated, and that help will be given to the poorer nations."

Debt activists have long argued that eligibility for debt cancellation should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the 41 countries worldwide that are potentially eligible for HIPC, there are at least 11 others, they say, urgently in need of debt cancellation. In Africa, they mention Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

"We suffer from the unfair misunderstanding that we are a rich oil country that does not need debt relief," Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo said earlier this year. "In spite of our oil endowment, our debt to export ratio is 250 per cent, which both the IMF and World Bank agree is far too high for a developing country." Nigeria's economy is highly dependent on oil, which brings in 40 per cent of GDP and 85 per cent of foreign exchange earnings. However, despite its relative oil wealth, poverty is widespread and it is among the 20 poorest countries in the world, according to the Bank. Per capita income, at $310, is lower than the $390 that is average in the HIPC countries.

Those seeking to expand HIPC relief, also point to the situation in Zimbabwe, a country the World Bank views as "low-income with moderate debt." In 1996, its debt-to-exports ratio was 160 per cent, slightly higher than the HIPC threshold. The case is made that Zimbabwe needs HIPC relief because continued debt-servicing hampers its ability to confront urgent health crises such as HIV/AIDS or to spend in vital areas such as education. At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe spent 1.2 per cent of gross national product on debt compared to 9.1 per cent on education. By 1995 this had risen to 10.3 per cent on debt and 8.5 per cent on education. Health absorbs 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product, in a country ravaged by HIV/AIDS, while interest payments on debt account for about 3 per cent. Zimbabwe has one of the world's highest HIV infection rates. Life expectancy, once in the high 60s, has shrunk to below 50 years. But the country's involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it at one point was spending some $3 mn a month, weakened its case. The Bank and the Fund have frozen all new lending to the country.

Extending HIPC to poor countries such as Nigeria and Zimbabwe is out of the question for the Bank and the Fund. There simply is not enough money, they say. According to Mr. Masood Ahmed, deputy director at the Fund, "If you try and expand the scope to cover all the poorest countries ... the magnitude becomes such that it's not only completely unaffordable for the Bank and Fund, but it would actually mean ... we would have to then close down PRGF as a facility because it's a revolving fund ... and pull out of support for the poorest countries." ■

Foreign investment to Africa slips

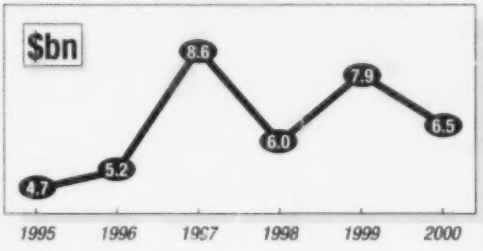
Foreign direct investment (FDI) in sub-Saharan Africa slumped from nearly $8 bn in 1999 to some $6.5 bn in 2000, bringing the continent's already low share of FDI to below 1 per cent of the world total and reversing an upward trend in recent years (see graph). The drop, chronicled in the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) *World Investment Report 2001*, reflected the the fact that investment flows to two of Africa's three largest FDI recipients, Angola and South Africa, were cut in half in 2000. Another 20 sub-Saharan countries suffered more modest declines. FDI inflows to North Africa, as a region, remained at about the same level in 2000 as they did the year before, $2.6 bn.

The new figures, while disappointing, UNCTAD reports, are still significantly higher than FDI flows in the early 1990s, reflecting the success of African efforts to improve business climates and raise investor confidence. Investment remains concentrated in just a handful of African countries, however, with Angola, Nigeria and South Africa receiving nearly 60 per cent of FDI inflows last year. For these and a number of other African countries, reports UNCTAD, "FDI continues to play an important role in financing capital formation."

A handful of the more industrialized African countries do not only receive FDI, but also invest abroad themselves. In 2000, African corporations invested some $1.3 bn outside their own countries. South Africa alone accounted for 43 per cent of this amount. With the restructuring of South African industry following the end of apartheid and the economy's greater opening to world markets, a number of firms began investing in new markets abroad and listing on foreign stock exchanges to tap into external capital sources, which were considered essential "for survival in the new climate of global competition," UNCTAD reports.

Foreign direct investment, sub-Saharan Africa

Inflows, $ bn



Source: UN Africa Recovery from data in UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2001.

AFRICA RECOVERY TALKS TO... UNCTAD'S Kamran Kousari

Mr. Kamran Kousari is one of the senior African development specialists at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and has been responsible for a number of the agency's major reports on Africa. Over the past year, UNCTAD has been pushing strongly for doubling foreign aid to Africa — a "Marshall Plan." Africa Recovery *interviewed Mr. Kousari at UNCTAD's headquarters, in Geneva.*

'There is no level playing field for Africa'

UNCTAD is calling for a "Marshall Plan for Africa"? What do you envisage?

Kousari: It sounds like a paradox to say that Africa needs more aid today in order to be less dependent on aid in the future. But that is exactly how the Marshall Plan worked. If we double official development assistance (ODA) to Africa from today's $10 bn a year and maintain it at $20 bn a year for about 10 years, there would be sufficient national savings, investments and private flows to replace the need for aid.

The Marshall Plan provided a major injection of capital which helped revive the economies of Western Europe after the wreckage of the Second World War. The final payments were never disbursed. They weren't needed because the European economies had begun to grow on their own.

The situation in Africa today is similarly dire. In the 1980s, after the global recession began, the prices fetched in global markets by Africa's commodity exports started to plummet. Many countries were forced to borrow to make up for the shortfall in revenues. They became "net borrowers" from international financial institutions and bilateral donors. This is when the structural adjustment experiment took shape in Africa. It has been devastating because one of its basic principles is the reduction of the role of the state in the economy.

Market-oriented policies, trade liberalization and capital account openness have dominated the continent's economic policies. In sub-Saharan Africa, "getting prices right" did not lead to greater supply response. Furthermore, there was no entrepreneurial class to step in to fill the void left by the state. Also, the markets were weak or non-existent and the public and private institutions needed to manage a market economy just were not there. Since independence, the productive capacity of many countries had been based on state-owned enterprises. In the agricultural sector, the state ran commodity boards that regulated prices and ensured that farmers received minimum prices for their produce. It also provided a range of other services farmers need that won't be provided by the private sector.

It is clear that the structural adjustment experiment has gone sour. Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa has increased. From 300 million people a decade ago, some 380 million people are now living in absolute poverty, under $1 a day. This speaks for itself.

What needs to happen now?

Kousari: We need a frank assessment of the effects of macroeconomic and structural adjustment policies on growth and on income distribution policies. The new "poverty reduction" policies, which redirect public spending to health and education, are useful but probably won't have a lasting impact on poverty as long as policies in areas like agriculture, trade, finance, exchange rates, enterprise deregulation and privatization don't succeed in raising growth and ensuring better income distribution. If these policies are to succeed, they must be combined with sufficient resources invested in human development, physical infrastructure, as well as institution- and capacity-building.

The basic principles of structural adjustment programmes that form part of HIPC [Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative], have not changed. It is like giving an aspirin to someone who is in serious pain. Poverty reduction must be linked to policies that will set the stage for sustained growth and development. In short, what is needed is a greater reliance on the market than was allowed in the post-independence era and a greater role for the state than is allowed in the context of structural adjustment.

Can foreign direct investment help?

Kousari: There is a lot of talk about the role foreign direct investment (FDI) can play in Africa. But the fact is that investment of private capital *follows* growth. It doesn't lead growth. There has been some investment in privatized sectors, like telecommunications, where there is a captive market. But selling assets will only give governments short-term liquidity, it won't have a long-term impact on development. The Latin American experience is telling in this respect.

Of course, the quality of FDI is important. Is FDI buying existing assets or bringing in new assets? Is it generating employment and creating new capacity? Is it helping to spread technology within the country? Is it helping to penetrate new markets? Most African countries, apart from those which derive most of their earnings from extractive industries, are still dominated by agriculture. FDI could create value-added activities in the agro-industrial sector; it could create new plants and new capacities. But unfortunately, this type of FDI is not flowing into Africa at the moment.

Could the global market-place become a "level playing field" for Africa?

Kousari: If African producers could develop their competitiveness before being subjected to the full forces of the market, then you might be able to say that the system is a "level playing field." But we need also to consider the relative weight of the trading partners. Most African countries don't have the necessary legal and institutional capacity to hold their own against the interests of developed countries. They are at a disadvantage in arguing in the World Trade Organization [WTO] dispute settlement body and they can't make credible threats of retaliation as some major trading countries can do.

There have been various measures giving preferential and differential treatment for the poorest countries. But these will expire in a few years, and anyway the benefits they bring have already been eroded in the push towards trade liberalization. Much more should be done to give preferential treatment to these countries.

How else can Africa compete with the huge technological and marketing capacities of companies based in Canada, the EU, Japan and the US?

Then there are issues like the application of sanitary and phytosanitary requirements [see pages 7-9], which also affect Africa's ability to compete. Kenya has successfully diversified into the production and export of cut flowers but it has run into difficulties dealing with the various standards that are applied in different developed country markets. The phytosanitary provisions should be defined in objective terms, negotiated by an international body, and developing countries should have their say. Standards should not be based on unilateral judgment, and Africans should at least be given training in how to meet these standards.

The issues are quite technical, but they have a real impact on the world. Thousands of fishing families were affected when the EU stopped importing fish from Lake Victoria [in East Africa] because, it said, the lake was polluted. It may or may not have been. I am not a judge of pollution or of the health hazards of eating fish from Lake Victoria. But fish is so vital to Africans in this region that the international community should have helped to get rid of the problem and compensated the fishing people and their families. Instead, it put up barriers and said, "You cannot export your fish anymore." We talk of poverty alleviation but nothing was done to help these very poor people. Farmers in the EU get compensated to the tune of millions of euros when their cattle has to be destroyed. How can African governments, which are already heavily indebted and run on shoe-string budgets, afford such compensation?

When it comes to battles over trade issues, size matters. In trade disputes between the US and the EU over the hormones-in-beef question or the banana issue for example, where billions of dollars are at stake, major trading countries can exert sufficient pressure through retaliation in order to ensure compliance. But there is no level playing field for African countries that are going up against EU barriers. No level playing field for Kenya trying to export cut flowers. Do Africans have the legal training or the ability to employ slues of lawyers to come to Geneva and convince the WTO dispute settlement panels of their case? You know, this talk of trade liberalization should be taken with a grain of salt.

Certainly, I think that everyone should play by the rules of the game. But when it comes to supply, capacity, capital and technology, Africa will certainly find itself at a disadvantage. It is like saying that the rules of the game of rugby are the same for everybody. Then you bring in a team of professional rugby players to compete against a bunch of twelve-year-old kids. The rules are the same, but who is going to win?

AM / Sarita Firoozi

Agricultural equipment factory in Maputo, Mozambique. African economies need policy flexibility, including infant-industry protection, to develop.

How could a "Marshall Plan" for Africa help?

Kousari: First, money is needed to rebuild a lot of public and private institutions. The state has been reduced to such an extent that it is no longer able to operate properly as a state institution. Now, we have a state that has neither the capacity to run enterprises nor the capacity to regulate and govern the activities of the private sector.

A possible development model for Africa is actually East Asia, where the private sector worked in partnership with the public sector. The state identified areas where it thought the private sector might have a competitive advantage and it supported entrepreneurs willing to invest in those sectors. State support included time-bound protection, easier access to credit at advantageous terms, export credit, provision of certain subsidies, lower tariffs on imported capital goods or intermediate goods,* and the provision of infrastructure support.

It doesn't take an intellectual Houdini to see that Africa must be able to enjoy the same flexible policies that the emerging market economies had during the early stages of industrialization — like infant-industry protection, the ability to subsidize local producers and provide local business people with loans at below-market rates. For African producers to be competitive in international markets — which have become highly capital- and technology-intensive — they need long-term "breathing space." They need better access to markets for manufactured goods.

And, of course they have to get their policies right. In East Asia, the carrot and stick approach was taken. The carrot was the provision of time-bound support, credit, finance and protection. The stick was the threat of removing this support. That model could easily be applied in Africa where conditions now are no different from East Asia in its early stages of industrialization.

Initially, Africa's industrial development could be based on commodities. Creating additional value on raw commodities by processing them before export would be a good start. Africa needs to diversify both into new areas of activity and by producing more processed goods. Instead of exporting coffee beans, African exporters could diversify into "designer" coffees. In metals and minerals, there is scope for going into manufactured or semi-manufactured products. It doesn't require a great deal of technological sophistication.

If they applied the same policies as in Asia, adjusted to individual countries, there isn't any reason why Africa couldn't start a major growth process. If Africa were provided with financing, given policy flexibility, as well as access to markets, I don't see why it couldn't attain the same type of growth that East Asia had. Once they have access to markets, they will build the capacity to supply products. ■

** Like machinery and other capital goods, intermediate goods are also part of the production chain, for example, imported pesticides or fertilizer in agriculture.*

AFRICA AGENDA

FUTURE EVENTS

9-11 November 2001, Leiden (The Netherlands) — African Studies Centre Conference on African Urban Economies. Contact Hester Sanderman, tel (31) 752-73376, e-mail <sanderman@fsw.leidenuniv.nl>.

15-18 November 2001, Houston (US) — 44th Annual meeting of the African Studies Association, on "Africa and the African Diaspora: Past, Present, Future." Contact Michelle N. Peterson, tel (732) 932-8173, fax (732) 932-3394, e-mail <michpete@rci.rutgers.edu>.

27 November-5 December 2001, Cape Town, (South Africa) — Second Wellcome Trust Workshop on HIV/AIDS and TB. Contact Carole Roberts, tel (27-21) 938-0359, fax (27-21) 938-0368, e-mail <carole.roberts@mrc.ac.za>.

9-13 December 2001, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — The third African Development Forum, organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on the theme "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration." Contact Peter Robleh, ECA, tel (251-1) 44 52 27, fax (251-1) 51 65 63, e-mail <probleh@uneca.org>.

9-13 December 2001, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) — 12th conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa. Tel (226) 37 31 39, fax (226) 37 31 37, e-mail <cisma2000@cenatrin.bf>.

18-22 March 2002, Monterrey (Mexico) — International Conference on Financing for Development. Tel (212) 963-2587, fax (212) 963-0443, e-mail <ffd@un.org>.

June 2002, Rome (Italy) — World Food Summit to review progress made towards ending hunger five years after the previous summit. Fax (39-06) 570-55249, e-mail <food-summit@fao.org>.

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

29-31 October 2001, Accra (Ghana) — International Conference on Mobilizing Local Resources for Community Development. Tel (233-21) 771953, e-mail <cafwestafrica@caf.charitynet.org>.

27-31 October 2001, Port of Spain (Trinidad) — 10th International Conference for People Living with HIV/AIDS. Tel voicemail (868) 622-8045, fax (868) 625-0632.

15-16 October 2001, Chicago, Illinois (US) — Advancing Partnerships with Africa. Conference on bilateral trade and investment opportunities for Illinois and Africa. Contact Africa Business Centre, tel (312) 355-3175, fax (312) 413-9730.

30 Sept.-2 Oct. 2001, Philadelphia, PA (US) — The third biennial US-Africa Business Summit of the Corporate Council on Africa, on the theme of "Building Global Partnerships." Tel (202) 835-1115, fax (202) 835-1117, e-mail <cca@africacncl.org>.

14-16 September 2001, Preston (UK) — Human Rights in Africa in the New Millennium at the University of Central Lancashire. Contact Liz Kelly, tel (01772) 892250, fax (01772) 892938.

31 August-7 September 2001, Durban (South Africa) — "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." Contact Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, fax (41-22) 917-9050, e-mail <wcr.hchr@unog.ch>.

APPOINTMENT

Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi has been reappointed by the UN Secretary-General as his special representative to Afghanistan, a position from which he resigned in 1999. Mr. Brahimi, a former minister for foreign affairs of Algeria, also has led a number of other missions for the UN, including as special envoy to Yemen, South Africa, Zaire and Haiti. During 1989-91, while under-secretary-general of the League of Arab States, he helped mediate the end of the civil war in Lebanon.

AFRICA BOOKS

The Political Economy of Housing and Urban Development in Africa: Ghana's Experience from Colonial Times to 1998 by Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang, (Praeger Publishers, Westport, Connecticut, US; 2000; 248 pp; $65)

The Psychology of Management in African Organizations by Denis Chima E. Ugwuegbu (Quorum Books, Westport, Connecticut, US; 2001; 304 pp; $65)

Success and Failure of Microbusiness Owners in Africa, ed. Michael Frese (Quorum Books, Westport, Connecticut, US; 2000; 216 pp; $59.95)

On Borders: Perspectives on International Migration in Southern Africa, ed. David McDonald (Palgrave, New York, US; 2000; 320 pp; hb $45)

A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide by Linda Melvern (Zed Books, London, UK; 2000; 288 pp; hb $69.95, pb $19.95)

Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa by Rita Abrahamsen (Zed Books, London, UK; 2001; 192 pp; hb $65, pb $22.50)

Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms, ed. Lora Lumpe (Zed Books, London, UK; 2000; 256 pp; hb $69.95, pb $27.50)

Investment and Risk in Africa, eds. Paul Collier and Catherine Pattillo (Palgrave, New York, US; 2000; 400 pp; hb $85)

Power Sector Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa, ed. John K. Turkson (Palgrave, New York, US; 2000; 304 pp; hb $75)

The Baobab and the Mango Tree: Africa, the Asian Tigers and the Developing World by Scott Thompson and Nicholas Thompson (Zed Books, London, UK; 2000; 224 pp; hb $65, pb $22.50)

Technology and Skills in Zimbabwe's Manufacturing: From Autarky to Competition by Simon Teitel (Palgrave, New York, US; 2000; 208 pp; hb $69.95)

Africa's Changing Markets for Health and Veterinary Services, ed. David K. Leonard (Palgrave, New York, US; 2000; 361 pp; hb $79.95, pb $25)

Development, State and Society: Theories and Practice in Contemporary Africa by Seyoum Hameso (Authors Choice Press, New York, US; 2001; 448 pp; pb $25.95)

Women in African Economies – From Burning Sun to Boardroom: Business Ventures and Investment Patterns of 17 Ugandan Women by Margaret Snyder (Fountain Publishing, Rochester, Michigan, US; 2000; 353 pp; $30)

States of Development: On Primacy of Politics in Development by Adrian Leftwich (Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Massachusetts, US; 2001; 240 pp; hb $69.95, pb $29.95)

Developing Countries and the WTO: A Pro-Active Agenda, eds. Bernard Hoekman and Will Martin (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK; 2000; 336 pp; pb £19.99, $39.95)

L'avenir de la zone franc by Hakim Ben Hammouda and Moustapha Kasse (Editions Karthala, Paris; 2001; 520 pp; FF 220)

L'Afrique peut gagner by Pierre Merlin (Editions Karthala, Paris; 2001; 200 pp; FF 110)

Le Botswana contemporain by Daniel Compagnon and Brian Mokopakgosi (Editions Karthala, Paris; 2001; 432 pp; FF 180)

Une Afrique s'invente by Enda Graf Sahel (Editions Karthala, Paris; 2001; 326 pp; FF 160)

La malnutrition en situation de crise by Claude Prudhon (Editions Karthala, Paris; 2001; 344pp; FF 160)

Jim Grant: UNICEF Visionary, ed. Richard Jolly (UNICEF, New York, US; 2001; 180 pp; $10)

Associational Life in African Cities: Popular Responses to the Urban Crisis, eds. Arne Tostensen, Inge Tvedten and Mariken Vaa (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden; 2001; 324 pp; pb $29.95)

African Voices, African Visions, eds. Olugbenga Adesida and Arunma Oteh (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden; 2001; 217 pp; pb $29.95)

Facets of Globalization: International and Local Dimensions of Development by Simon J. Evenett and Shahid Yusuf (World Bank, Washington, D.C. US; 2001; 288 pp; pb $30)

Aid and Reform in Africa, eds. Shanta Devarajan, David Dollar and Torgny Holmgren (World Bank, Washington, D.C. US; 2001; 712 pp; pb $35)

AFRICA IN BRIEF

A new African agency will insure investments

On 20 August a consortium of seven African countries launched the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) to provide political risk insurance and other financial services to promote trade and investment in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. The new agency is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and is backed by Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It aims to offer affordable insurance to both African and foreign companies against such risks as expropriation, embargoes, inability to convert or transfer currency, loss or destruction of goods and facilities through war or civil strife, and discriminatory import and export taxes.

With start-up funding of $105 mn from the World Bank and $100,000 each from the seven founding governments, ATI plans to issue its first insurance policies by the end of the year, and become self-sustaining within two years. Other African countries have expressed interest in joining ATI, which hopes to underwrite $5 bn worth of new trade and investment before the end of the decade. ■

Poverty, conflict worsen mental disorders, says WHO

Mental illness is not only the result of biological and psychological factors, but of social factors as well, says the *World Health Report 2001*. In Africa, mental health disorders provoked by war, conflict, natural disaster, AIDS, poverty, oppression of women and racism are more likely to occur than elsewhere, argues the report of the World Health Organization (WHO), released in October. Although the problem in Africa is significant, the continent has few personnel or facilities to provide treatment to the mentally ill. The number of psychiatrists for every 100,000 people in Africa (excluding Algeria, Tunisia and South Africa) ranges between none and one, compared with more than ten in North America.

According to the study, stress, anxiety, depression, lack of self-esteem and suicides can be side effects of poverty. Poor people often point out that not being able to provide for one's family is a recurring source of stress. As a result, says the report, "individuals with mental disorders, particularly in developing countries, are commonly poorer than the rest of the population." The relation between poverty and mental illness is complex. The report argues that poverty and mental disorders exist together in a vicious cycle. Economic deprivation, low education and unemployment contribute to mental and behavioural disorders that in turn lead to increased health expenditure, loss of jobs or reduced productivity.

The cycle is hard to break, the report recognizes. Low-income countries have neither the capacity to eradicate poverty nor the resources to provide the needed care for those with mental disorders. The report therefore suggests a creative approach to mental health that includes "training of all personnel, making essential drugs available at all health facilities, and moving the mentally ill out of prisons." In Uganda, for example, mental health was integrated into primary health care in 1996. Such steps do not require many resources, but mainly a change in approach to the problem. Most importantly, argues the WHO report, just as the taboo about discussing AIDS is starting to disappear, it is important to remove the stigma surrounding mental disorders to facilitate public debate about possible solutions to the problem. ■

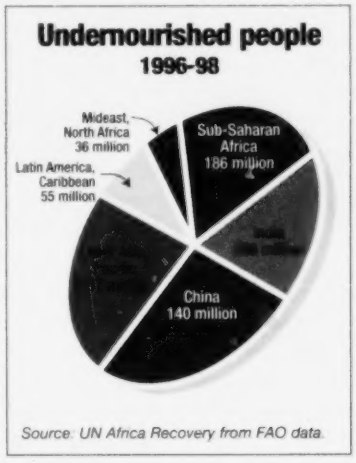
UN, Annan awarded Nobel prize

Both the United Nations and Secretary-General Kofi Annan were awarded the 2001 Nobel peace prize on 12 October. The UN, said the Norwegian Nobel Committee, was awarded the prize because of its efforts to end poverty, protect the environment and secure social justice and because "the organization is at the forefront of efforts to achieve peace and security in the world." In fact, the committee stressed, "the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations." Mr. Annan was recognized personally for "bringing new life" to the UN and for emphasizing a host of issues outside the organization's traditional focus, including human rights, terrorism and HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Annan is the second UN secretary-general to receive the peace prize, joining Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, who received the award posthumously in 1961. Although UN agencies or other officials have received the prize on seven previous occasions, this year's award is the first given the UN as a whole. "All of us who work for the UN should be proud today," Mr. Annan told reporters. "But ... the only true prize ... will be peace itself."

FAO reports little progress in easing African hunger

Researchers at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report that a third of Africans are undernourished, and that the percentage has changed little over the past 20 years. The FAO's *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2000* put the number of undernourished Africans in 1998 at just under 186 million, or 34 per cent of the total population, compared to 38 per cent in 1979. Somalia was judged the most malnourished country in the world, with 75 per cent of its inhabitants suffering chronic undernourishment in 1998. Afghanistan ranked second with 70 per cent, followed by Burundi, Eritrea and Haiti. Of the 24 countries with malnutrition rates greater than 35 per cent, 19 are in Africa.



The report also found that severe malnutrition was much higher in Africa than in any other region, with average food deficits greater than 300 kilocalories per day among the undernourished in 46 per cent of African countries, compared with 16 per cent of countries in Asia and the Pacific. Three of the five countries with food deficits above 400 kilocalories per day are in Africa, with Somalia again the worst affected with an average nutrition shortfall of 490. ■